APRIL 3, 1934 10¢

Masses

Taxi Strike

By JOSEPH NORTH

In New Kentucky

A PLAY by SAMUEL ORNITZ

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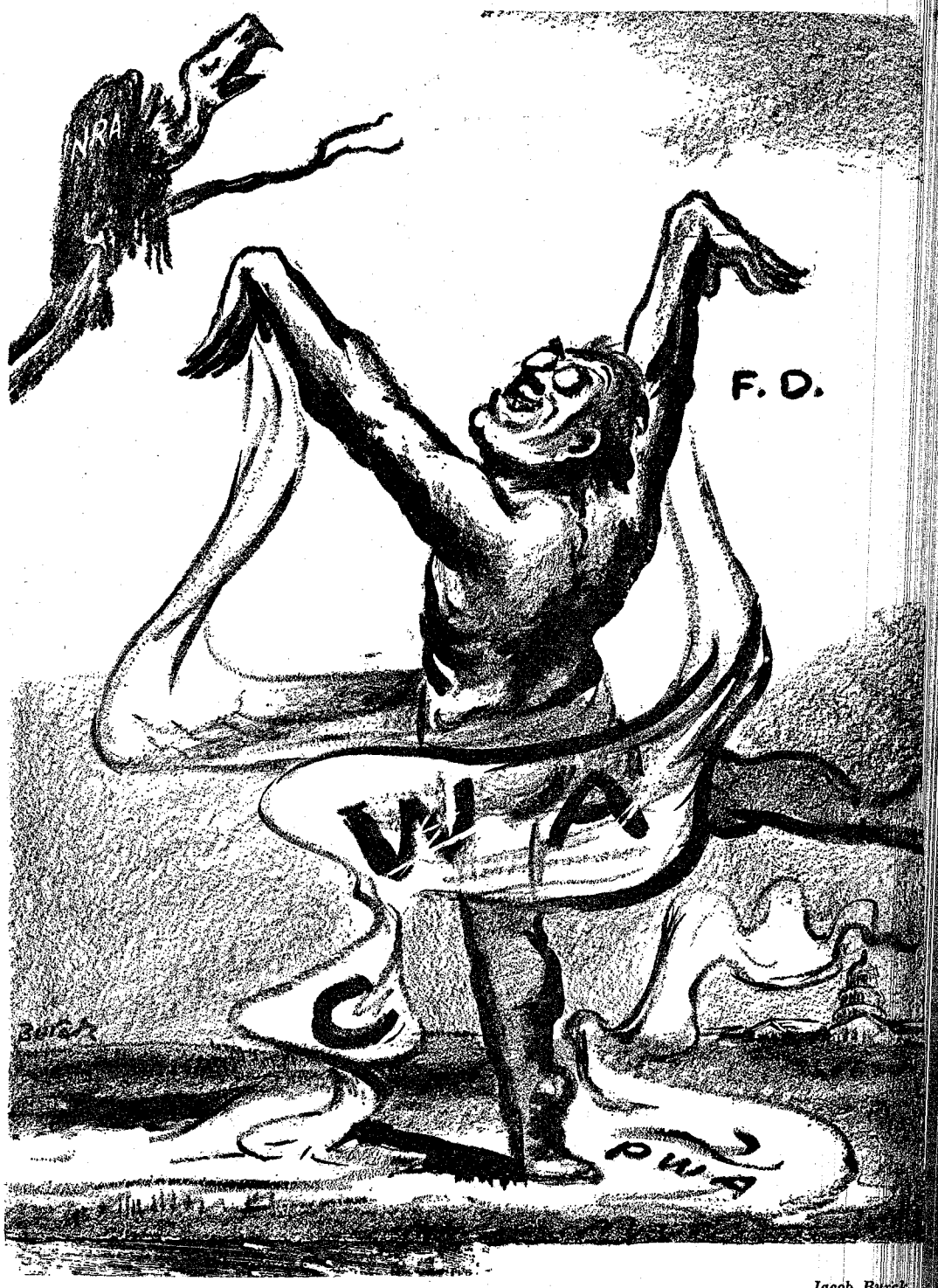
new Masses

APRIL 3, 1934

THE secretly negotiated agreement between Roosevelt, Green and the automobile manufacturers, has sent 250,000 automobile workers, who were straining for the order to strike, back to their shops—for the time being. The agreement has postponed the strike—it has not altered the basic starvation conditions which make this strike, and others of equal or greater magnitude, inevitable. The agreement has done more: it has stripped the N.R.A., finally and officially, of its last pretense that it is a policy under which workers are guaranteed the right to organize. President Roosevelt has called it "A pioneer effort in human engineering on a basis never before attempted." He proclaimed: "We have set forth a basis on which, for the first time in any large industry, a more comprehensive, a more adequate and a more equitable system of industrial relations may be built than ever before."



THE SEVENTH VEIL — *Jacob Burck*

"THE 'company union'," the New York Times editorial declared Monday morning, "which it was supposed this Administration was out to destroy, stands completely validated by the President's statement—so long, that is, as the workers prefer that kind of organization." The Times further significantly commented: "This must make a great difference in both the Budd and Weirton cases, which the Department of Justice has been trying to get into the court." It was a gray Monday morning in Detroit when the workers first learned the complete details of the "compromise"—the typical A.F. of L. bargain which cedes the employers the basic demands and gains for labor, infinitesimal concessions. In this case the workers can discover no gain whatsoever. Instead they saw the hard outlines of the most monstrous sell-out the A.F. of L. chiefs-of-staff have perpetrated in recent times. The workers learned that Roosevelt's "human engineering" consisted in putting the official seal of Washington on the company union. They learned, as the Herald Tribune commented, that "the manufacturers were particularly pleased that the clarification of section 7A seems to uphold their contention in behalf of the company union." They learned that Alvan Macauley, president of the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce thanked the Chief Executive and General Johnson for their ability "to find a settlement in accord with the principles in which we believe."

WHAT were those principles? The "merit clause" for one. This permits the manufacturers to fire and blacklist active union members on the pretext of inefficiency. Another thing: the workers in order to achieve representation in "collective bargaining" must submit their necessarily secret lists of union members to an allegedly impartial committee. Impartial committees, history has shown, have been amenable to pressure—particularly to the pressure on the purse. And what guarantee have the workers that the overlords of their industry will not gain access to the membership list? After which the "merit clause" sweeps into operation. The workers learned that a board of three, "whose decisions will be final and binding on employer and employee," will determine whether the will have milk for the children and rent for the landlord. And those workers who know—the Auto Workers Union

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of the Trade Union Unity League and the Communists—have been warning the proletariat time and again that the history of labor boards has been one of betrayal of the working class; the present National Labor Board a classic example. The trio to pass on the demands of worker and employer have been chosen; Nicholas Kelly, of the Chrysler Motor Company for the manufacturers; a dubious Richard L. Byrd, for "labor"; and Leo Wolman, ex-associate of Herbert Hoover, the "impartial" third. It was Prof. Wolman who signed the "merit clause" in the auto code. All this dovetails perfectly with the plans of the Wagner bill which proposes to perpetuate strike-delaying and strikebreaking machinery in the form of a National Labor Board with arbitrary powers. To increasing thousands in the country the Roosevelt-N.R.A. administration stands revealed as a strikebreaking government: these masses will come to the inevitable conclusion that organization and strike action alone can break the shackles of company unionism which to date, have already fettered 700,000 workingmen.

IN an interview with Willam Philip Simms (N.Y. World Telegram, March 28), Koki Hirota, Foreign Minister of Japan, once more proclaims his country's pacific intentions towards the United States and the rest of the world. "The national interests of the United States and Japan are complementary rather than conflicting. . . . Japan must have peace and order in East Asia and, therefore, is taking the lead in a job for the good of the entire world. . . . In Manchuria, Japan hopes to set up a model state. . . . This may lead to a peaceful and prosperous China. . . ." As for the Soviet Union, "Japan has no intention of attacking Russia, and I do not believe that Russia intends to attack us, so there should be no war." Unctuousness has characterized Japan's diplomacy ever since her imperialists started on the rampage.

LET us see how Japan puts into practice her peaceful protestations. Her recent purchases from the United States are revealing. For military transport: 8,000 special 3½-ton wagons; 35,000 side-less flat cars; nearly 16,000 regular oversize 12-wheel, tractor-type trucks. Metals: nearly 60,000 tons of scrap iron during the last year (largest purchase from America); 40 million pounds of lead for bullets (a 25 percent increase over her 1931 purchase); $1,800,000 of special steels (an increase from $280,000 in 1932); and Japan has already ordered this year 145,000 tons of special nickel steel, 192,000 tons of steel bars and slabs, and 89,000 tons of ingots. Weapons and ammunition: 200 huge army tanks, 3,000 airplane engines, $5 million of fire-arms (100 percent increase over last year); 1,000,000 feet of gunstave lumber. In addition, Japan has increased her nitrate order 100 percent. And as for cotton, her purchases during the first 12 weeks of this season were "the biggest for this period in the history of the trade."

Johnson

SOCIALIST PARTY LEADER:—
"THE EXCLUSION OF THOSE UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS MAKES THIS A *REAL* UNITED FRONT!"

SIMILAR figures could be cited of Japan's feverish purchases of war materials from England, Germany, Spain, and other countries. Japanese militarists are rushing preparations for a gigantic war. Hirota's hypocritical remarks mean little. Of course he would like to win the United States. Through him Japanese militarism is endeavoring to establish an agreement with American imperialism as an immediate preliminary to a declaration of war against the Soviet Union, and thus to arrest Soviet ideas from spreading over the Asian continent. Hirota significantly asserts that "far from wishing to take on the pacification of Asia alone, Japan not only welcomes but invites the co-operation of the United States, Britain, and other powers." And the best expression of co-operation is, according to him, whole-hearted support of Chiang Kai-Shek. "The present Nanking government far from controls all of China. It is sorely beset on all sides by rebels, Communists and bandits. If Chiang Kai-Shek fails, there is no telling what will happen." Hirota fears "chaos"—chaos being a synonym for a Soviet Asia.

DR. WIRT, the professor from Gary, is just the man we've been looking for. Along about Wednesday night of any given week, we're apt to be a bit worn out by the struggle of getting the magazine to press. Relieved by the knowledge that the revolution is being looked after by the Brain Trust in Washington, we can afford to let down. According to what the loquacious representative of the Brainy people told Dr. Wirt, the thing is in the bag. We can expect to wake up some morning and find the Pravda (formerly known as the New York Times) announcing that the hammer and sickle is flying over Moscow-on-the-Potomac. On his second guess the good doctor also mentioned Hitler. Hitler and Stalin. Well, it would be a trifle confusing, but a man of Dr. Wirt's calibre, with his experience as cultural mentor in a captive city of United States Steel, could undoubtedly work it out. In fact we are impressed by what he has to say on Hitler. We'll even go so far as to say that anybody who can't see Hitlerism or Fascism written all over the N.R.A. is either blind as a bat or Norman Thomas. As for the doctrine that Communism can come by evolution or by the mysterious activities of somebody skulking around the Department of Agriculture, we must dissent. It is a pleasant idea but it is nonsense. For the benefit of Dr. Wirt we might say that Communism calls for the overthrow of capitalism, the abolition of private property and the dictatorship of the workers and farmers. In short, it calls for revolution. We can absolutely guarantee the doctor that there will be no secret about it. The news will even reach Indiana.

APRIL 1st. Easter Sunday. "Christ is risen." April Fool's Day: Three million C. W. A. workers to be swept into the streets to swell the army of the hungry unemployed. A red letter day all around—the press looks eagerly forward to the Fashion Parade on Fifth Avenue. The workers remember Roosevelt's promise, upon launching C. W. A., that "the administration is determined that American citizens should no longer be forced to live under the auspices of relief organiza-

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tions." Now he proposes to dump them all back on relief at a level even lower than that before the inception of the C. W. A. program. Under his new three-point attack on the unemployed, ex-C. W. A. workers in rural districts will be placed on direct relief, in kind, on the barest subsistence basis; those in communities built around "sick" or "dead" industries will be transplanted en masse to grow-your-own colonies, while urban workers—"those in direst need"—will go on forced labor work-relief projects on an absolute minimum budgetary basis. Present plans call for wages ranging from $7.20 to $12 per week in New York City, where the cost of living is highest. In other cities, the minimum of $7.20 will probably serve as the maximum.

BUT workers do not rely these days upon Resurrection. They also plan to rise—in protest—on Easter Sunday. Representatives of hundreds of thousands of workers, C. W. A., employed and unemployed, will converge on Washington from all parts of the country for a two-day conference to culminate in a march on the White House, April 2nd. Demands are to be presented to President Roosevelt for continuation and extension of the C. W. A. program, and for unemployment insurance, specifically that embodied in the Lundeen Bill now before Congress. The groundwork for this nation-wide conference was laid during the past week by huge mass demonstrations and strikes on C. W. A. projects, featured by the one-hour strike called for Thursday, March 29th, on C. W. A. jobs and in shops of union sympathizers throughout the country in protest against the disbandment of Civil Works. On Sunday, the 25th, more than 8,000 workers participating in a united front demonstration at Madison Square Garden, called by the United Committee of Action on C. W. A., heard a speaker hurl this defiant challenge at the Administration: "They have declared war on us, on our lives, our homes and our children's health. Very well! We answer, let there be war. We'll fight back!" And the thousands roared approval. That roar is likely to be echoed at the workers' conference on C. W. A. and unemployment insurance at Washington on April 1st.

HEDGING, palaver, delay—these are the methods President Roosevelt and his aides employ in their effort to mesmerize the rebellious railroad workers into quiescence. Roosevelt is determined to enrich bondholders at the expense of workers. Here are some tell-tale figures. Interest charges on railroad bonds (and one-half of the capitalization of the railroads is in bonds) increased from 511 million in 1929 to 553 million dollars in 1933. Under the New Deal income for profit of the railroads jumped to 75 percent—from 214 million dollars for the last eight months in 1932 to 419 million for the corresponding eight months of the New Deal. The R. F. C., under Roosevelt, magnanimously supplied half a billion dollars to enhance railroad profits. But while the bondholders were being taken care of, the railway workers have lost 380 million dollars as a result of a ten percent wage cut imposed upon them through the collusion of Roosevelt, the owners, and the corrupt Brotherhood officials. Indirect wage cuts due to sharply rising prices and part time work amount to considerably more. In view of this, President Roosevelt's proposal to continue the ten percent pay cut six months beyond June 30, 1934, the date of its expiration, is preposterous. Even the corrupt railroad labor executives, on the pressure of the rank and file of course, had indignantly to reject it.

THE President's latest proposal is to submit the controversy to the decision of a "fact-finding" commission which would, according to the N. Y. Times editorial, "find in favor of restoring basic wages of railway workers if carloadings from next October to January reached the level of 1931." The union leaders, driven by the increasing unrest of the rank and file who clamor not only for an unconditional return of the ten percent cut, but for an increase of ten percent to offset the steeply rising living costs, are expressing mild opposition to the President's proposal. The parleys with the President are not promising. Unless the mass of railroad workers take vigorous action, they will be sold out again. After a White House Conference, Tuesday, March 27, A. F. Whitney, chairman of the union committee, sounded suspiciously hopeful and cheerful. "We are going to continue with Mr. Eastman in an effort to bring about a settlement of the controversy through mediation . . . if it is not decided by the time the President returns from his fishing trip, the doors of the White House will be open for the railway employees to confer with him. We are much more hope-

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ful than before our talk with the President. The whole question has been placed in a much better atmosphere and we won't go to the mediation board, in any event, until the President returns." While the President is disporting on millionaire Astor's yacht, and while Mr. Whitney is enjoying the "much better atmosphere," the railroad workers are laboring at sweat shop wages "as a result of which the standards of living of certain railway classes have been reduced to the level of Chinese coolies." Thus on the southern railroads section hands' wages are presumably as high as $6 a week. Of this the company retains sixty cents. On the remaining $5.40 the worker is expected to support himself and his family.

THE third anniversary of the arrest of the nine Scottsboro boys was a gala event for Jefferson County jail authorities: they beat five of the boys severely, then locked them in solitary confinement. The official excuse framed by Warden Erwin and Sheriff Hawkins sounds like an inspired passage in a cheap thriller: The Scottsboro boys "tore legs from tables and chairs and wrenched away plumbing pipes . . . Armed with improvised clubs, the Negroes fought among themselves and dared the wardens to enter the cell block," etc. Of course, the real purpose of this latest persecution is not to end the alleged "disturbance" made by the boys inside the jail, but to combat the enormous disturbance which their sufferings have evoked all over the world—the sympathy, protests, and demonstrations by hundred of thousands of workers during the last three years. By keeping five of the boys in solitary confinement the jailers are now free to begin a new phase of terror: individual intimidation, demoralization, and perhaps even that brand of murder which Nazi coroners have been taught to name "suicide." The International Labor Defense calls upon all workers and intellectuals to demand immediately that Gov. Miller end this latest attack on the personal safety of Williams, Robertson, Powell, and Roy and Andy Wright.

DURING the past few years the Negroes in the south have shown their readiness to fight against those responsible for their miseries; and the southern aristocrats are acutely aware of this threat. Two years ago a group of Negroes in Dadeville, Ala., were terrorized by gangs because they were organizing with the Sharecroppers' Union. Many were given voluntary protection by white farmers. The Kentucky miners' strike in Bell and Harlan counties produced a fighting solidarity between Negroes and whites which has been growing ever since, as strikes by Alabama miners and Baltimore Marine workers brilliantly demonstrated a month ago. The Sharecroppers' Union now numbers over 5,500 members, most of whom are Negroes. Fraternizing between Negroes and whites is steadily increasing as they come to understand that their miseries are traceable to the same source, that their enemies are the same: the agrarian and industrial capitalists who use barbarism and terror against all militant workers, white and Negro alike.

ON the basis of legal victories gained in their struggle, Scottsboro supporters are now turning hopeful eyes toward Tom Mooney, serving his seventeenth prison year in San Quentin, Cal. Following the precedent established when the I. L. D. forced the U. S. Supreme Court to order new trials for the Scottsboro case, Attorney John F. Finerty is charging that Mooney has been denied due process of law (violation of the 14th Amendment); that he was convicted by admittedly perjured evidence, and that the trials were held under conditions making for prejudice against the defendants —facts previously established both by the 1918 Wilson investigation and the Hoover-Wickersham commission. It is significant that both the Scottsboro and Mooney frame-ups occurred in two sections apparently competing for preeminence in the present nation-wide bigotry, barbarism, and persecution. Although it has still some distance to go in order to equal the South's bloody record, the Golden State has recently been traveling at top speed, with a lynch-wave, its relentless Red-baiting campaigns, and an Imperial Valley terror against the working-class of which even Hitler might be proud.

AFTER much tumult, shouting, and righteous opposition, the red *Internationale* invaded the halls of the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra last Thursday, having been smuggled in by that well-known agent of Moscow, Leopold Stokowski. In accordance with his belief that adult audiences are incapable of reacting to new music without prejudice, Stokowski played the Red anthem at a concert for young people. To the consternation of their elders, many in the audience joined in the singing . . . and survived to tell the tale. Stokowski asked that the French words be sung because "he had been unable to find an English version which does not distort the meaning." We have compared the best English translation with Pierre Degeyter's original composed over a half century ago, and, if the English "distorts" at all it is by understatement. What some object to is the unsingable nature of certain passages, notably the opening chorus line: "'Tis the final conflict." The vowel sounds of "C'est la lutte finale" lend themselves readily to singing, particularly the last two words, which are prolonged by the voice. The inadequacy of our English translation is both a challenge and an opportunity for poets. A first-rate English version of the *Internationale* would be a real contribution to the revolutionary movement.

IN a nation rushing headlong toward Fascism and war, the eighth Communist Party Convention, opening in Cleveland, April 2, is of the greatest significance to 120,000,000 Americans. In Cleveland will be hammered out the policies in the trade unions and mass organizations which aim to unite the masses against the strikebreaking program of N.R.A. And there, the party of revolution, which today numbers 25,000 and finds itself the focal-point of dissenting millions, will discuss the technique of extending the struggle for bread and work into an irresistible onslaught upon the already weakened ramparts of capitalism. They see beyond the horizon, envisaging complete victory in Soviet power for the working class and its allies. This is a convention upon which the eyes of millions should focus—workers in the A.F. of L., as well as T.U.U.L. and independent unions, the sorely-tried middle classes, the students, intellectuals, the millions of farmers. The convention, opening with a mass meeting in the Music Hall of the Cleveland Public Auditorium, will find non-party delegates on hand, as well as tried revolutionaries. The deliberations of the class destined to power should be studied by everyone feeling the whiplash of a frenzied monopoly-capitalism backed against the wall.

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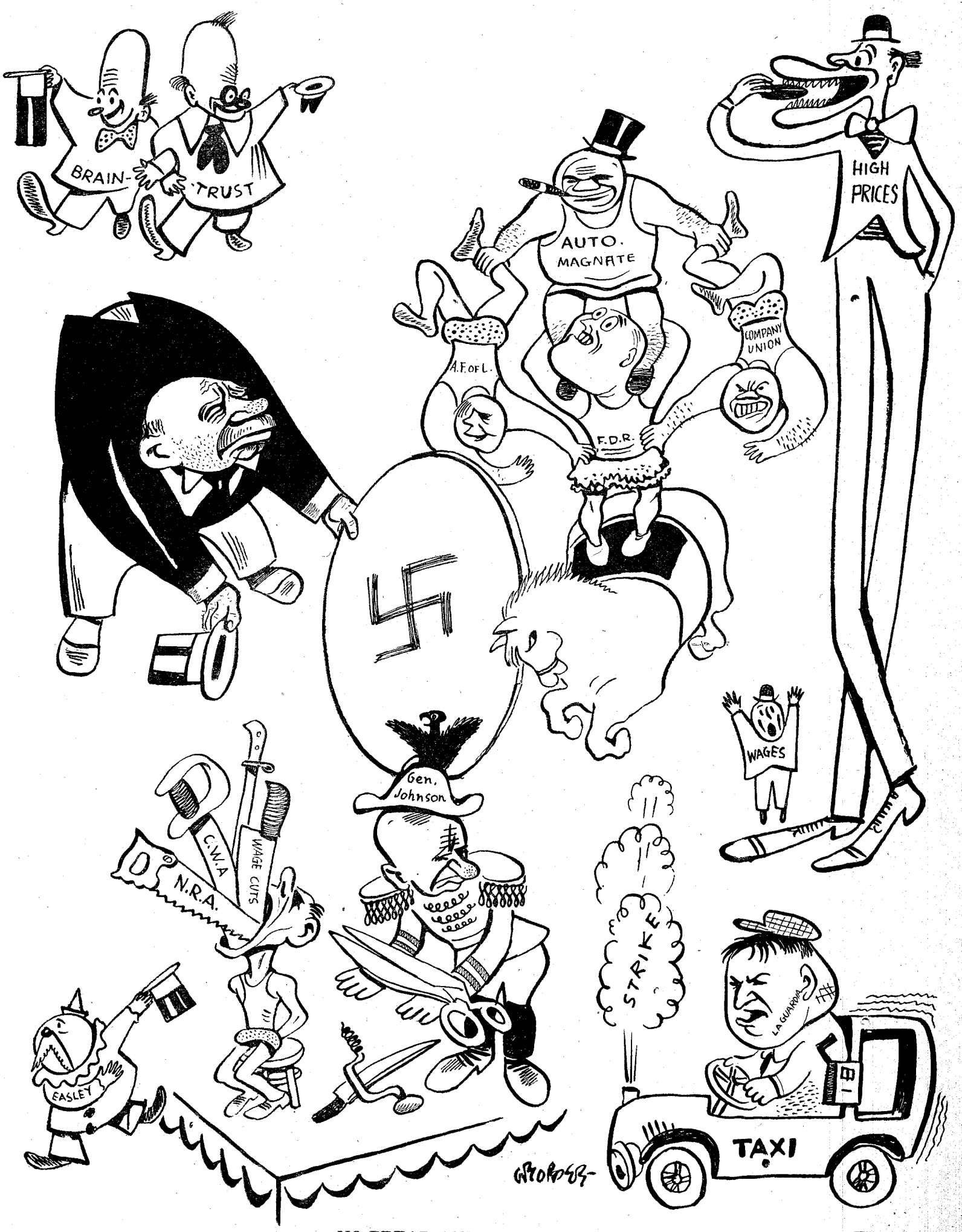

NO BREAD AND A BAD CIRCUS

William Gropper

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The Safest Risk in the World

ONE OF the most significant financial news items of the past fortnight was buried away in the back pages. If any editorials were written about it I did not see them. If anybody made speeches about it I did not hear him. Which is perhaps not so extraordinary after all.

I am referring to the decision of the Swedish Government to grant an eight-year loan to the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics—with an interest rate of 5½ percent. Contrast this with discount rates of 25 to 35 percent which the Soviet Government had to stand for two or three years ago, even on short-term loans. And contrast it with the fact that Japanese 5½ percent bonds are quoted currently at 78⅜, Argentine 5½s at 65, and German 5½s at 44¼.

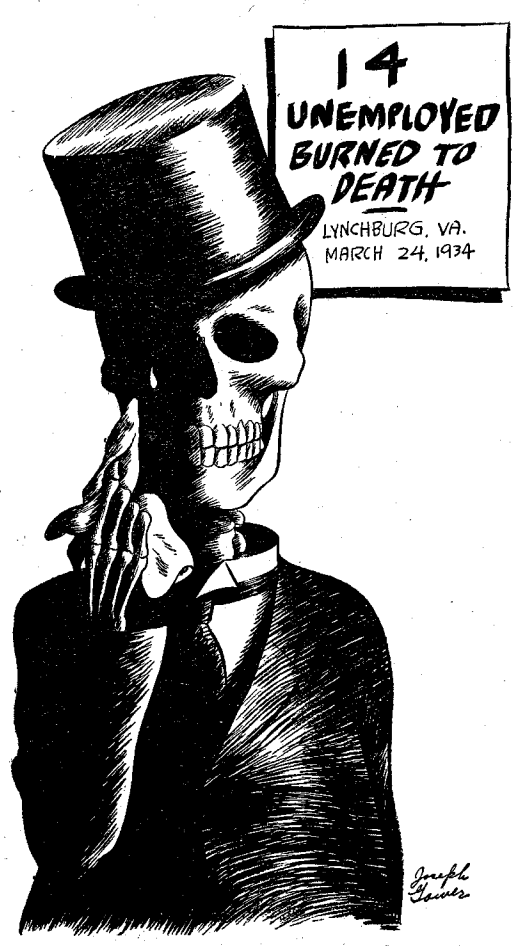
Obligations of most of the outstanding governments of the capitalist world are obtainable today on a higher yield basis than 5½ percent. This is true as regards such a traditionally sound credit risk as the Belgian Government. It is true in the case of Italy. It is true of Norway and Denmark. International capitalists no longer trust each other any further than you could kick an anvil. They no longer have confidence in the vitality of their own structures of economy. They no longer have faith in the stability of their regimes.

What a paradox of history this is, that capitalism itself should be obliged to turn to the land of socialist construction for a safe credit risk!

The Swedish Government must win the approval of the Riksdag before it actually goes ahead with the loan. Whether or not that approval is forthcoming, the lesson of the loan agreement as already worked out will remain largely unaltered. Opposition now would be strictly political in import. The proposed terms of 5½ percent show how definitive is the economic judgment in the matter. And capitalist demoralization has gone too far for political considerations to exercise any lasting restraint. If Sweden does not advance money to the Soviet Union at moderate interest some other power will. The present action of the Swedish Government comes at a time when Britain has just signed a new trade agreement with the Soviet Union, when France is hesitating and when the United States Government has just formed a new bank for the development of Soviet-American trade. The proceeds of the Swedish loan would be devoted exclusively to purchases from Sweden. A good market and a safe credit risk, not even in its heroic age would capitalism spurn them without a heart-rending inner struggle.

While I am on the subject of the Soviet Union as a credit risk it seems appropriate to recall some of the problems of investment in this country during the past year or more. In the latter days of the Hooverian era, when people became apprehensive as to the soundness of the American banking structure, they began to take money out of the banks and hoard it. Then came the acute banking crisis, the closing of the banks, the abandonment of the old gold standard, the depreciation of the dollar, and its "revaluation" on a 59.06-cent basis. The man who hoarded his few dollars in an old sock has prevented their being lost, but they no longer represent the same purchasing power as they did originally. Some months hence their purchasing power is likely to be still smaller.

Under the prevailing conditions "sound" investments have been increasingly hard to find. People who bought high-grade American corporate or government bonds are receiving interest in depreciated dollars; when the principal falls due it will be paid in depreciated dollars. In such a perspective commitments of this sort can hardly be regarded as investments in the accepted sense of the term. This is recognized more or less freely on all sides today. For some time investment counsellors have been advising their clients to put their money into common stocks instead of bonds—in other words to speculate frankly on inflation profits.



Joseph Gower

Meantime, a growing number of individuals has discovered that bonds of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics may be purchased in this country to yield 7 percent, and that the purchaser is protected against further depreciation of the dollar because the bonds are payable in gold. Payment is not made by actual delivery of gold metal but is made in dollars based on the daily quotation of the dollar in terms of gold. This is true as regards both principal and interest. Interest is payable quarterly at the Chase National Bank of New York.

A few days ago I was in the office of the Soviet-American Securities Corporation, which markets the bonds. Letters were being sent out to clients who had bought a number of months before. I looked through several of these letters. Their message was so unusual for these days that I asked for a representative copy to take with me.

Here it is:

"This is to advise you that the Soviet Government Gold Bonds which you purchased a year ago may now be re-sold at any time at their full gold value. At today's rate of exchange of $86.28 per 100 gold roubles, the 103 bonds for which you paid $5,299.35 are now worth $8,886.84, plus accrued interest from December 1, 1933. This appreciation in the value of your bonds is due to the fact that they are payable on a gold basis and, as a result of the fall in the value of the dollar, they have correspondingly risen in value.

"Should you desire or find it necessary to sell your Soviet Government bonds at any time, we shall be glad to be of service to you."

In order to insure long-term marketability, the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. has agreed to repurchase all bonds on demand of the holder at par and accrued interest at any time after one year from date of purchase. But nobody wants to sell. The Chase National Bank announces that several people have called to find out if they could get the full price for their bonds and on being answered in the affirmative decided that they would rather keep the bonds. According to the bank authorities not a single bond has been offered to them for repurchase!

There is money in knowing your religious rituals. Some enterprising individual at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, penciled the following brief lines on a postal card and sent it in to a leading New York financial news service a few weeks ago:

"Over 10 million pounds of flour will be rolled into matzoths in the next 30 days. Who gets these flour orders? Please supply information on your ticker."

MARKET FOLLOWER.

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Taxi Strike

JOSEPH NORTH

So you ride the streets all day long and at five o'clock you look at the meter and what do you see? A soldier. [$1—Ed.] "Good Christ," you say, "you gotta make three bucks more before you turn in." So you cruise the streets round and round and finally you get desperate and you open the door and say, "Come on in. Anybody." And who should walk in? A ghost. So you say to the ghost, "Where to?" And the ghost says, "Drive me around Central Park." So you drive the ghost around Central Park till the meter hits four bucks. Then you ask him for the dough. Then the ghost tells you he's broke. So you t'row him out and you go back to the garage. You shell out t'ree bucks of your own so you don't get the air. When you get home, the wife says, "Where's the dough?" Then you tell her, "Today I gave it to the company to keep the job." So she says, "Keep your job hell. You're keeping the company. Well, pick. Who's it you gonna keep? Me or the company?" So you gotta pick. Who you gonna keep, men, the wife or the company?

—Hackie's Fable.

MEN WHO ply the streets for their livelihood develop a characteristic attitude: the highways belong to them. When they go on strike, be they taxicab drivers, or traction employees, the authorities may well expect the major pyrotechnics of revolt. The police nightstick can flail from day to night, it cannot dislodge the idea. The Mayor may cajole and storm in turn from dawn to dusk but the men of the streets stay on the streets. The streets are theirs—not only the gutters. As the New York cabbies say in their juicy lingo that springs partly from their slum derivations, partly from their enforced association with the night-life characters of a big city, and partly from the peculiar conditions of their trade: "What? Them weasels tell us to get off the streets? Spit on them! Push me off, rat!"

The strike of the New York cabmen stands unique in American labor history: it is, to date, the biggest in the industry and possesses connotations of great importance to all American workingmen. Forty thousand cabmen abandoned their wheels for the sake of an independent union, and against the strait-jacket of a company union. They symbolize most spectacularly the rebellion of the American workers—700,000 of whom have been weasseled into company unionism under the pressure of finance capitalism and the N.R.A.—against the flumdummery of "employee-representation" organizations.

The major engagement—at the moment—against company unionism is being fought in New York City. Good warriors always seek allies. First they gauge the strength of their opponent, and then they must, perforce, achieve all possible aid.

The taxi drivers learned early in this strike the lineup of their enemy. Briefly, it is this:

1. The N.R.A. and its concomitants: the Regional Labor Board as represented by Mrs. Elinore Herrick, that shrewish, class-purblind matron; Ben Golden, weasel-worded and smiling, "I'm something of a Marxist myself"; the rest of the Blue Eagle officialdom from William Allen, Deputy N.R.A. administrator, up to Roosevelt himself, termed by one of the dubious leaders of the taxi men as "that Great Humanitarian in Washington who won't let us suffer injustice."

2. Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, the Hackies' Friend. Fiorello's promises at election time won the support of the 60,000 cabbies who claim the control of a quarter million votes (their families and friends, etc.) "He give us the run-around the first strike," the strikers say puzzled. "And the way we run around getting him the vote." The entire city apparatus, particularly Bernard Deutsch, president of the Board of Aldermen, who was thrust forward by Fiorello in this strike as an "impartial arbitrator." But the cabbies called the mayor's bluff. "Once fooled, twice cautious," strike leader Sam Orner said.

3. The Socialist Party, which includes former Judge Jacob Panken, whose tactics during the last strike left him in somewhat bad odor but who continues to jockey for leadership and edge in one way or another. The New Leader sabotaged the United Front Conference of New York workers supporting the taxi strikers with an editorial which read: "Many strong and sympathetic unions affiliated with the A. F. of L. have indicated they will not be represented because Communist organizations have also been invited . . ."

4. The company union and their outstanding representative, Mr. Irving "Rat" Robbins.

5. The New York commercial press. It has been many a moon since the local papers have so revealed themselves in their class nakedness—liars, accepters of bribes in the form of "paid advertisements," tirelessly working to swing "public opinion" against the cabmen.

6. The police department and gangsters, both those imported from Chicago where they were organized several years ago in the Yellow Cab war and the local varieties recruited by the Sherwood Detective Agency.

7. And, behind the scenes, the vast strength of the General Motors Corporation.

The allies of the strikers, and these developed very early in the strike are of course:

1. The inchoate, but non-the-less palpable weight of the masses—particularly the millions of New Yorkers on C.W.A. hunger rations, the thousands of other strikers.

2. The left wing unions of the Trade Union Unity Council of Greater New York and the Communist Party and its allied organizations. The Communist Daily Worker, which alone of all the dailies in the city told the truth about the strike.

3. The cabbies' erstwhile "enemies," the Negro cabbies of Harlem, who were previously jimcrowed even by the white cabbies.

This, briefly, was the local lineup of forces, in the contemporary American war of capital against labor, particularly as it effects the question of unionism.

The trio of policemen bivouacked across the street and dawn found them cracking slats to heap on the fire. Three ruddy faced cops—"mugs"—pretended to ignore the hackies picketing the Parmelee garage at 23rd Street and Eleventh Avenue. One patrolman picked a carrot from the gutter and fed a blanketed horse, deliberately turning his massive blue-coated back on the strikers. Across the street this hackie, Leo Chazner, strike placards flapping against his chest and back, eyed him obliquely. "I been in the racket seventeen years," he told me. "I never seen a strike like this one. The beauty part of it is, kid, we're making history for the whole woild. The eyes of the woild is on us—the New York hackies."

He marched up and back, hackman's cap and worn overcoat. Every time he passed the garage entry he peeped inside. "What a sight! Look at them, kid, look at them! Two hundred and fifty of 'em crowding the walls." Within, shiny cabs, row on row, stretched a full block to the next wall — phalanxes of beautiful cars — eerily silent, something uncanny about them like all machines when the human factor is extracted. He boasted of the Parmelee cab. "Wonderful engine. Hums like a boid. Don't know you're riding. No bumps." We had tramped all over lower Manhattan that morning from garage to garage, picketing and checking up on the turnout. Radio police cars swept up and down West Street. Across the boulevard, ocean liners trumpeted in from the harbor. The first trucks lumbered their route, but no taxis rolled. "Look at the avenoo," Cabby Chazner gloated. "Clean as a whistle."

That was Saturday morning. The previous night the strikers had swirled across Broadway, leaving a wake of wreckage which plunged the iron deep in the Parmelee, Radio and Terminal fleet operators. Cabs lay on their sides, the wheels grotesquely whirling; here and there they burst into flames, scabs fled down the street pursued by strikers, while mounted police picked their way through the streets at the fore and rear of the demonstrations. The cabbies' "Educational Committee" was on the job. Parmelee, Radio and Terminal fleet owners spent thousands of dollars for full paid advertisements in the commercial press moaning "Vandals!" and calling for the military. "Take the scabs off the street and there won't be no violence," the hackies re-

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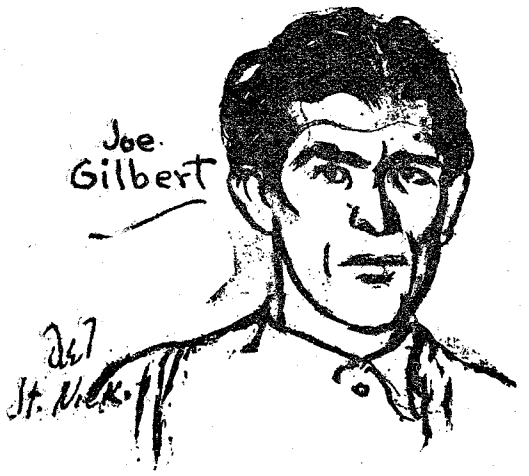


sponded. "Who's driving them cabs? Chicago gunmen wit' soft hats: say, did you ever see a hackie on duty wit' a soft hat? That's the Parmelee Chicago gunmen . . ."

The next day when the strikers took a night off, I heard a detail of mounted police at Fifteenth Street and Irving Place taunt a crowd of hackies, "Well, well, them Chicago boys got you on the run now, ain't they?" The strikers retorted, "Say, mug, look, look—there goes Dillinger! See if you can catch Dillinger."

Forty-five hundred drivers of the Parmelee System, Inc. (a General Motors unit), left their wheels March 9 on strike against the formation of the company union and the discharge of their shop steward, Samuel Jaffe. Declaration of war at the 155th Street and Bradhurst garage spread to all the Parmelee garages in Manhattan, Bronx, Harlem and Brooklyn by night. Leadership of the strike was in the hands of the newly formed Taxi Drivers Union of Greater New York.

The strike committee of nine, three from each borough, dispatched pickets to the garages. "Stop all cabs trying to roll." A list of twelve demands were put on paper: these included reinstatement of all discharged men for union activities; abolition of the spotter system; two weeks' vacation with pay for all regular drivers; uniform caps to be supplied by the company, no discrimination against Negroes. And foremost, union recognition.

In brief, the strikers seek the right to form a strong independent union of their own choice. They have rebelled against the stool-pigeon dominated company-union, the Brotherhood, which signifies this much to the men: a continuance of blacklist, subservience to the company and to lower-than-subsistence level wage. ($8 to $12 a week for a 16 hour day.)

The New York hackie is a man in whom revolt has been festering for many years. Every policeman has the right to commandeer his cab at any moment without compensation —for police duty. The city officialdom has raised his tax, his license fee, forced him to plaster his photo in the cab in a sort of Bertillon system, libeling him a semi-underworld man. Pugnacious and independent by nature, he has resented the need to live off the tip, which always carries with it a smack of mendicancy. He found redress nowhere; neither the press which he has learned belongs to those who "give him the woiks"; nor the government, for who but they elected Fiorello, the self-announced hackies' "friend," they ask.

The hackies are bad men when riled. Like all long-enduring workers, they are not finicky about scabs or company property. They have developed a technique in this strike: the Education Committee—("Better teachers than Yale professors")—which is a guerilla picket line well adapted to the needs of a big city strike of this sort.

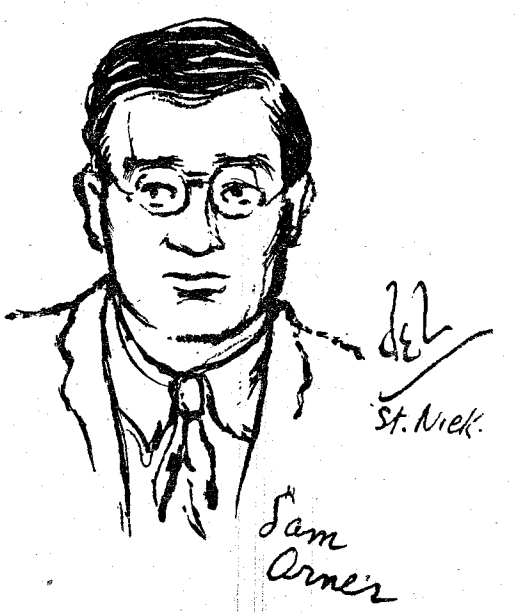
Scab drivers halted by a red light often find the committee of "professors" waiting on them. To the epithet "Rat!" or "Mouse!" or "Weasel!" the scab finds his car doorless or even in flames—a lit match flicked into the engine beneath the hood does the trick.

Enter Mrs. Elinore Herrick, chairman of the NRA Regional board and her retinue: Mr. Ben Golden, Mr. William Allen, et al. The hackies have not forgotten Mrs. Herrick's apoplectic outburst in the first strike when she screamed, "If I had my own way I'd throw the Committee of 13 out of the window." The N.R.A. representatives offered the men a poll to choose between the company union or the Taxi Drivers' Union of Greater New York, the same offer with variations repeated by La Guardia, Deutsch, the fleet operators. But what has brought the men out on general strike if not the hated company union? They have already voted by taking strike action — skirmishing with police and gangsters, by facing nightstick and bullet. When Mrs. Herrick proposed that the men go back to work and then hold the plebiscite, the union officials telegraphed they had learned a lesson from the Weirton and Fifth Avenue Bus Co., plebiscites. The fleet owners then drew Mr. Irving "Rat" Robbins from their proverbial silk hat. Mr. Robbins, Stool Pigeon and head of the Drivers Brotherhood, the Parmelee Company union, grew lyrical. "The Parmelee system is the swellest company in the world. We haven't got a single kick." Then he grew lyrical over the police department which "is doing a swell job. For the first two days of the strike there was a lot of rough stuff. But the police are now on the job every minute." He promised all scabs this excellent police service. Then he topped it by announcing a telegram to Bill Green, requesting admittance in the A.F. of L. "Birds of a feather sure are flocking together," Joe Gilbert, outstanding strike leader, commented.

The taximen discovered the extent of their allies' strength when a conference of all unions and working class organizations backing the strikers overflowed at Manhattan Lyceum, March 18, and moved on to Webster Hall. One hundred ninety trade unions, the great majority from the Trade Union Unity Council of Greater New York and left wing organizations were represented. "Today we feel we are not alone in the struggle against the company union," Organizer Gilbert said. The Communist Party sent fraternal greetings, publicly announced its support and proffered a contribution of $50 to the strike fund. By Monday, March 19, the Parmelee strike had grown into a general strike: 27,000 men were out. Scarcely a taxi wheel turned in New York. The tide of victory headed their way. A number of small fleets, totaling 5,000 cabs, settled.

Then followed a weary round of deliberations at City Hall with Fiorello cooing and roaring in turn while his policemen consistently cracked the heads of strikers. Despite the operators' vow never to sit "at the same table" and confer with the hackies, on Saturday, March 24, they huddled, glowering across the room at Orner, Gilbert, and the taxi leaders. The overlords of the taxi fleets swallowed their patrician aestheticism: the cabbies' ultra-plebian behavior (resulting in a loss of $250,000 to the fleet owners) brought the big shots down from Park Avenue and the Grand Concourse. Fiorello thereupon presented the following proposition: hold a plebiscite, but only those on the payroll of the three big companies January 30 and 31 be permitted the ballot. Such a plan includes only 5,000 cabs and eliminates half the drivers. The strikers turned the proposition down cold, the next day, at St. Nicholas Arena. Since that time plan and counter-plan has been tendered: General Motors, through its president, Alfred P. Sloan has directly lent a hand to shove the company union into pre-eminence on the basis of Roosevelt's Detroit "pioneer effort in human engineering."

How race hatred melts in the crucible of class struggle was poignantly evidenced when a Negro hackie from the Harlem detachment of strikers addressed the strikers at Germania Hall. "Boys," he said, "when you say you're with us, mean it. Mean it from the bottom of your hearts! We been gypped ever since 1861 and we're from Missouri. If you show the boys up in Harlem you mean what you say, then you're getting the sweetest little bunch of fighters in the world: for them spades driving the Blue and Black taxis up there can



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do one thing—and that's fight!" The hats began to fly in the air. He gestured for silence. "And when we fights together, us black and white, man, they ain't nobody can stop us!" The ovation he received from these recently politically-uneducated workers was tremendous; it signified to me how deeply-inured prejudices and hatreds fostered among the proletariat can vanish overnight when solidarity is needed in common struggle.

Returning to strike headquarters after the meeting (it was necessary to run a gauntlet of files of bluecoats, mounted horsemen, radio cars, and riot trucks), Hackie Chezar clapped his hand to his forehead. "Oh, for a couple hours of shut-eye," he groaned. "I been up three days straight now." At leaflet-littered strike headquarters on 42nd Street I read the placard in rude hand-printed letters, "Watch Out for These Cars: Yellow Cab Large Sedan—Penna Plates; Terminal Cab 021-644; Couple N. Y. Plates I-T-5469." Chezar watched me. "Gangsters and dicks riding them cabs," he commented.

A massive youth, pugnosed and Irish, they called him Pondsie, was recounting the demonstration the delegation of cabbies received at the Communist district convention in the Coliseum the other night. "We walks in and the Communists go crazy. They stand up, about a million of 'em, and start singing. We go up on the platform and they give us the spotlight." The crowd about him listened intently. "Then when they come to the chorus of the song they're singing they give us the Communist salute." His left fist — a huge affair—goes up in a sort of short uppercut. "Know what their salute is?" he asks, looking around the room, "The left hook." And he

demonstrates it again and again. The others in the room watching him, try the salute, too. I notice a youth with a palm cross on his lapel, giving the left hook. (It was Palm Sunday.) "And then," Pondsie finishes his story, "they have a collection. Man, they raked the coin in wit' dishes on broomsticks. 'Bout three hundred bucks them Communists give us."

The lad with the palm cross on his lapel raises his eyebrows. "Three hundred bucks!" He shoots a few left hooks in the air. "If them Communists are wit' us, I'm wit' them. Left hook!" he shouts. The others chorus, "Left hook . . . left hook . . ."

As we go to press, the fleet owners, through their company unions are demanding the arrest of Orner and Gilbert on charges of inciting to riot. Threats on their life have been made and the entire 40,000 cabbies have volunteered as their bodyguards. One hundred strikers have been arrested; many beaten to unconsciousness; others are in hospitals. Police inspectors ride decoy taxis. Cabs filled with beefy plainclothes men scour the streets, provoking attack by the pickets. Parmelee gunmen "wit' the soft hats" go round and round the city looking for "customers"—their lead pipes and revolvers in the side pockets.

More than that: at 41st Street and 7th Avenue a radio police car ran down Jack Stacher, of 1525 West Farms Road, a striker, injuring him so seriously he may die. The license number of the police car was jotted down by a striker; it is 4N-4744; and the badge of one of the policemen inside is No. 13197. At Roosevelt Hospital one of the doctors taunted Stacher: "Well, now what do you think about demonstrating and picketing?"

The newspapers continue to run full page advertisements — ridiculous in their patent falsity—raising the red scare, calling for still greater violence by the police.

It is open class warfare in the streets of this city of seven million. The humble cabbies, smarting with the indignities heaped on them for years—the butts of the traffic police, the victims of the night-life gangsters, chained to the wheel for sixteen hours daily by the fleet owners—(and behind them General Motors) —evolve into heroes. If they defeat all forces arrayed against them — and achieve the independent, rank-and-file union, this will prove a tremendous stimulant to the millions of American workers watching them. Hence, the bitterness with which General Motors is waging this fight. The hackies firmly believe "the beauty is, this strike is making history all over the woild."

Detroit Cries "Sell-Out!"

JEREMIAH KELLY

Detroit.

WITH THE final revelation of the compromise put over on the workers, Detroit is buzzing like a beehive. There isn't a plant or a department in any plant in all of the mighty automobile industry in Detroit where word isn't going from mouth to mouth, "Sell out"! When the half past eleven whistle blew, Monday, instead of going straight to eat, men hung around outside the big Hudson plant asking each other:

"What do you think?"

"It's a sell out!"

"The government stands for company unions!"

"Yeah. 7-A meant company unions all along. They can look over our membership lists."

"Yeah, they can see the membership lists now."

"We'd oughta struck last Wednesday."

As Orner said at the St. Nicholas Arena meeting, "The word is demonstration, demonstration and more demonstration! We have victory in our hands—it is a sacrifice to stay out twenty days, but if necessary we'll stay out twenty more days . . ."

"And twenty years, too," an exuberant hackie shouted from the rafters, "And twenty years, too, till we lick them mice!"

That's about the final word around the place! *We'd oughta struck last Wednesday.*

Tuesday, March 20, there was a meeting in Pontiac of all the union officials. The greater majority of the officials of the 13 plants represented, are men not long out of the shop. They do not, for the most part, belong to the old A. F. of L. officialdom. They had been called together to consider President Roosevelt's request that the strike be put off pending a conference with the leaders. It was a dramatic meeting.

There were many strong elements there who were for going ahead with the strike. The hour was ripe, they felt, for the auto workers once for all assert themselves. Already the strike had been put off from the 7th of March to the 14th of March and then from the 14th of March again to the 21st.

There had been hearings in Washington. The National Labor Board had been appealed to to settle the differences and not a thing had been heard from it. Nothing had come of the Washington hearings, except a voluminous report.

"We're tired of words, we want action," the workers had been crying. Still there seemed nothing to be done except to accede to the President's demand. After considerable discussion, this was agreed on.

There followed big mass meetings. The

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leaders went back to their various unions. Detroit, Pontiac, Flint, Lansing and Cleveland were all represented. Perhaps the single largest union is that of the Hudson plant. Arthur Grier and Melvin Owen reported back and again it took argument and persuasion before the rank and file of workers voted to accept a proposal to put off the strike again.

It is hard to describe the tension in Detroit during the days of waiting after the leaders had gone to Washington. The plants were aboil and abubble. Wherever groups of workers met on the street, they talked about the strike, they talked about Washington, they wondered if there'd be a sell out. Thursday passed and Friday and no word from Washington, except the word to delay the strike after the 48-hour truce was over. A wave of anger swept through the industry.

"Let's go out on Monday anyhow!"

Leaders reported back that it was hard work keeping the men in hand. Not only was the growing unrest in Detroit, but Flint and Pontiac demanded strike action. Saturday came and from Washington no word except "Delay the strike." Unrest had come to a point of explosion those last days. There had been four stoppages, led by the Auto Workers Union, in the following plants:

Dodge Final Body Assembly Department —1,000 stopped work 5 minutes.

Motor products—six departments struck.

Hudson Gratiot—Department 3,720 (Finishers) stopped work 5 minutes; Department 3,760 struck 15 minutes at 7:45 A. M.

Ternstedt Mfg. Co.—truckers stopped 5 minutes.

This stoppage was a demonstration against unbearable conditions and a call to action for the demands of the auto workers before it was too late. More and more workers agreed with the handbill put out by the Auto Workers Union, calling for a United Front Conference which said in part:

> Delay, delay, delay—that is the game of the manufacturers which the A. F. of L. officials are helping along. Strike, strike, strike—that should be the answer of all auto workers.
>
> The manufacturers want to delay, to pile up up stock, to confuse the ranks of the workers, to divide them up and wear out the fighting spirit. What would you think of generals who tell soldiers, all ready to go over the top, to wait, to delay, and do this not once, but many times. Such generals would be generals of defeat and surrender, not of fight and victory. And that is how the A. F. of L. officialdom is acting. Delay from March 7 to March 14, and again to March 20, and now once again the officialdom is pleading for delay.
>
> The men went to Washington at the President's request on March 7, but what did they get? Nothing. And lost valuable time instead of striking while the iron was hot. Now the President again asks delay, but offers nothing concretely. It's only two day's delay, the officials will say, but the workers have been delaying for over two weeks. This delay is particularly dangerous because everyone is ready to go.
>
> WE TOO MUST ACT—AT ONCE: DON'T PUT YOUR FAITH IN YOUR OFFICIALS. SET UP RANK AND FILE STRIKE COMMITTEES. STRIKE!

The Auto Workers Union which is the oldest union in the automobile industry and which led the Briggs strike last year, called this United Front Conference for Sunday, March 25. Carpathia Hall was filled with auto workers.

It was a fighting bunch. There were men from the M. E. S. A., the Mechanics Educational Society, there were men from the A. F. of L. opposition. Many individual A. F. of L. members from many departments and many shops were present. Here were the men who were tired of delays, sick of the stretch out, sick of under pay, tired of discrimination and all ready to do something about it. How pressing is the urge toward organization among the auto workers, the M. E. S. A. serves to show as an example. Started only a few months ago as an educational society, without funds and without membership, it has now organized 18,000 die and toolmakers, which recently led a successful strike. Within the last few weeks, it has gone in a production organization and has thousands organized. It is a militant and fighting union and is able practically to stop discrimination against its members.

These hundreds of men gathered here were the fighting core of the auto industry. They represented 70,000 other fighters. They are big two-fisted men who are ready to risk something for their organizations, are ready to look through the run-around given the labor by the N.R.A.

The President of the Auto Workers Union, Paul Raymond, was in Washington presenting the Auto Workers case and fighting against the sell out, which he had only too well anticipated. His place was taken by Earl Reno, who gave the background of the present situation.

He pointed out that the speed up had increased 125 percent all over the industry since '29, while the price of living has gone up and real wages has decreased. Instead of adding people to the industry, the payroll has actually declined. The tool and diemakers are finding $30.00 in their envelopes instead of $50.00, while their hours remain 10 and sometimes 12. Wages have only risen as a result of a wave of stoppages which have occurred in many places including Chester and Edgewater and Henry Ford came across with the $5.00 a day again.

"The workers know they must fight," he said. 'The employers are preparing in advance for a strike. They're stacking blocks up and piling up parts. They're shifting new men from the South in the shops and discharging the militant union men. The rigid physical examination is in abeyance so that they may prepare for the scab machinery. Scabs and gunmen are parading now through the plants, showing their artillery to intimidate the workers.

"The workers are keyed up. They are already to go out. They're sick and tired of the deadly speed. Sick and tired of starvation wages. They know there is nothing to hope for from the President who signed the slave code of the auto workers, for the merit clause is the open shop.

"The workers know that the N.R.A. sold out the Budd workers in Philadelphia, sold out the Weirton workers and they'll do the same to us."

He made concrete proposals which were agreed to for (1) a monster mass meeting, sponsored by the Auto Workers Union, rank and file of the M. E. S. A. and A. F. of L.; (2) Committees of protest and action to be set up in every shop and department in the industry, to institute strikes and stoppages for real union recognition and wage increase.

Hoffman, a big sailor, spoke next. He is one of the many who have been discriminated against and he now leads a Ford Workers Association Against Discrimination, a militant organization which numbers 300 and is organizing similar groups from other plants. He will have a hot field in Flint where 600 workers are pounding the pavements for having put faith in the promises of Section 7-A.

The story that he told might have been called the Education of an American Worker.

There was a spontaneous strike in the Ford plant of Chester. The work week had been cut from five days to four, the men were getting $16.00 a week and could not live on that. At ten o'clock on the morning of September 26, 1933, the chassis line walked out and every man on the belt walked out, too. The morning of the strike, the men elected a committee. They were asking besides higher wages, beside a substantial wage increase, thirty minutes for lunch and some place to stow their lunches except in lavatories.

Within two minutes of the walk out, Harris the superintendent had pushed a button and asked to have the men back at 7:30 the next morning. The next morning when some of the men came back to work, the plant had been closed down for an indefinite period and the men were locked out.

At that point Rinehardt, an A.F. of L. organizer, who Hoffman said knew nothing about organizing, came around and said he wanted to join up with the A. F. of L. In that way, he would have A. F. of L. protection.

"I've paid him $20 to have a charter which he said he would have ready for us in a few days." Hoffman went on. "We had a telegram from Green saying, 'I'm behind you 100 percent,' but there were no negotiations. Dewey, representative of the N.R.A. and Acheson, General Superintendent, had discussions. Nothing came of it. To our demands came an evasive reply, a very evasive reply, not even on Ford stationery and unsigned.

"On October 16, 600 scabs walking in mass formation and escorted by 200 cops

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went into the factory. When they came out again every man carried a wrench or a piece of pipe which we'd have been arrested for, if we'd had on the picket line. We appealed again to the A. F. of L. representative who answered:

"'Oh, by the way, have you paid us any money?'

"Edgewater was pulled out also at this time. 500 men in autos went to pull Dearborn out, but the A. F. of L. and the N.R.A. got together and said:

"'Don't go with Detroit. Don't go with Dearborn, you will hurt your case,' but we said: 'Now is your time.' We held a meeting and 1,500 men were packed into the hall looking for membership. The A. F. of L. did nothing about it.

"I went to Washington to put our case up to headquarters. Milton J. Hamlin said our strike was 'ill-advised' and when we told how we had the cruelest thing happen to us that can happen to workers, a lock-out, the Secretary of the A. F. of L., Morrison, replied, 'Sorry for you fellows. You industrial casualties.'

"Fellows," cried Hoffman, "don't fool yourselves! McGrady, Davis, Hamlin and Johnson will do nothing for you. The N.R.A. is powerless to force any of their rulings against any employer. Take a lesson from what we got. Only through your struggle will you get your right."

The experience of Chester Ford workers is a typical thing. This is what happens in the N.R.A. Here was a promising situation, damped down, muffled, destroyed.

The same thing has been happening to the vital movement among the auto workers in five towns, workers who have streamed into the A. F. of L. as they have into the M. E. S. A.

It is going to be difficult for the leaders back from Washington to explain to the militant workers in Flint why the books will be open to a committee composed of employer, worker and the member of the N.R.A.

It is going to be very hard to make the workers at Pontiac, who were clamoring to go out on strike Monday, understand that the A. F. of L. in the eyes of the government has the same ranking as the company union.

It is going to be hard for the Detroit workers, waiting for the word to go, to swallow the agreement which even the conservative Washington papers call a defeat for labor.

At least one thing has been accomplished. The government's point of view about what the union is and what collective bargaining is, becomes clearer. At least, few workers are going to rely on General Johnson and the N.R.A. doing anything but cast the vote against labor.

A Letter from England

JOHN STRACHEY

LONDON.

THE one definite political event which has taken place in Great Britain during the past fortnight is the capture, for the first time, of a majority on the London County Council by the Labour Party. I should explain that London is governed very differently from New York. Suffice it to say that a majority on this body, the London County Council, gives effective control of the city government. It is as if, say the fusion ticket in the last New York election had captured all city offices and a majority on all committees.

The accession to power of Labour in London is unquestionably an event of importance. It is true that it will have a very limited importance for the workers of London so far as their daily lives are concerned. There is no more possibility that the Labour Party on the L.C.C. will be able to do anything substantial in the way of improving working class conditions, than it was able or willing to do when it formed the National Government at Westminster. This is not only, of course, because of the inherently rotten character of the Labour party itself; it is because the whole attempt to carry out even the beginnings of socialism within the framework of the capitalist state is, as has now been proved again and again, utterly impossible.

The London Labour Party is incomparably less socialistic, and its leaders are distinctly less able men than were the Austrian Social Democrats. And yet we know whither even left social democracy of the Austrian model led. There is no possibility of better results in London. Indeed I shall be considerably surprised if the new Labour majority does anything as temporarily effective as were the Vienna housing schemes.

None the less it would be entirely incorrect to suppose that these election results are unimportant. It must be remembered that even in the heyday of the Labour Party's fortunes, in 1928 and 1929, it never succeeded in gaining a majority on the London County Council. Hence these election results indicate that the workers are turning towards what they believe to be socialism in far greater numbers than ever before. To this extent the results must undoubtedly be welcomed. Indeed it *would be* tragic if the bitterly anti-working class policy of the present Government had not driven the workers to the left. But it *is* tragic to reflect upon the character of the leadership to which the London workers have entrusted themselves.

The organizer, and, in fact, the undisputed boss of the London Labour Party is a certain Mr. Herbert Morrison. (Minister for Transport in the last Labour government.) It may not be amiss to say a few words about this personality, as he may easily play a considerable role in future British politics. Morrison comes from the extreme left of the British Labour Party. He was during the War a member of the British Socialist Party, which was one of the bodies which formed the British Communist Party. Before that time, however, Morrison had already begun what they call in France, "his pilgrimage to the right." By 1924 he had become one of the most anti-Communist and anti-left wing fighters in the Labour Party hierarchy. It was, in fact, by outbidding the Labour leaders in purging the party of Red elements that Morrison won the special confidence of Macdonald, whose favored protege he was.

*Morrison is a man of undoubted ability, but ability of the narrowest and most strictly administrative kind. He is fascinated by the intricacies of the administrative problems of the great capitalist trusts. He became, while Minister of Transport, a great friend of Lord Ashfield, the head of the great London traffic trust, the London General Omnibus Company, as it then was. Together Ashfield and Morrison devised the London Passenger Transport Bill, which has subsequently been enacted by the present National Government. In this bill, Morrison fully revealed what the word socialism had come to mean to him. It meant, in fact, the most developed form of monopolistic capitalism, the fullest protection and guarantee for the rights of the shareholders in the great monopolies, and State participation in their enterprises so that they may not be challenged by new competitors.

I should imagine that Morrison was genuinely incapable of seeing any distinction between such state-protected, profit-making monopolies and the administrative organs of a working class socialist community. For as Marx said long ago of a German economist, "his practical mind is devoid of the capacity of comprehension." In any case, whether Morrison could or could not, if he liked, understand the difference between the most bitterly anti-working forms of monopoly capital-

* During the 1931 crisis Morrison had a painful moment of indecision on the question of whether or not he should follow MacDonald into the "National" government.

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ism, and socialism, he certainly will not let himself do so. For it is only by pretending that no such difference exists that he can pursue his policy of "coördinating," as he would put it, the interests of Lord Ashfield and the other great London capitalists, and the London workers. Morrison and these modern minded capitalists will, if they have the chance, between them create a system of great efficiency. A system of great efficiency for maximizing profits, that is to say. There will be plenty of "planning," but it will all be planning for profit. The consequences of this very efficiency upon the workers will be even more devastating than are the consequences of a competitive unplanned capitalism. The very efficiency of the great monopolistic organizations, such as the London Passenger Transport Board, which Morrison and Ashfield have created, throws hundreds of thousands of workers out of employment, and imposes grinding conditions of *"speed up"* on those workers whom they do retain.

It is credibly reported that it has been decided that Morrison shall become the next leader of the National Labour Party, and consequently, in all probability, after the next election, the next Prime Minister of Great Britain. Thus the personality and character of Morrison assumes a national, and indeed international, importance.

In general, it may be said of him, that he approximates much more closely than do most British Labour leaders, to the continental, and particularly German, social democratic type. In other words, he is less of a sentimental liberal and more of a frankly reactionary bureaucrat than we are used to in the British Labour movement. He is the ideal man for the Labour Party's next function, which is, no doubt, to assist the British capitalists in the creation of a systematized, monopolistic structure, comparable to the German, and for that matter, the American cartels.

If Great Britain could be considered as a separate unit, cut off from the events of the rest of the world, we should be compelled to recognize that she is entering, for a brief time, a new period of social compromise. The "revival," microscopic and indeed non-existant from the point of view of the workers, is quite substantial from the point of view of the British bourgeoisie. There has been a considerable rise in the value of their stock exchange securities, and indeed in their receipts from dividends. There is a budget surplus, and with it a prospect of remissions in taxation. One section of the British governing class wishes to devour exclusively the whole of this and to keep the workers and petty bourgeoisie on the starvation rations to which they were reduced by the economy cuts of 1931. Another section, however, evidently believes that this would be to overdo things. There is a perceptible revival of liberalism, viz., the view that it is unwise to reduce the income tax of millionaires while the children of the unemployed are actually starving.

The great success of the Hunger March, the wide working class support which, in spite of the Labour Party's ban, the marchers obtained, their disciplined bearing in London and the working class activity which they have stimulated, have all strengthened the hands of this liberal element in the governing class. It seems extremely probable that quite perceptible concessions will be made to the unemployed in the budget. This, if it takes place, will mark a very real achievement on the part of the Communist Party and the other revolutionary groups which undertook the organization of the great movement of working class protest which culminated in the Hunger March. Stimulated by this protest, the section of social compromisers amongst the governing class is certainly gaining ground. Bishops and archbishops write almost daily to the newspapers on the theme that it may just possibly be a Christian's duty to provide sufficient nourishment for the children of the unemployed rather than to reduce his own income tax. The old British governing class tradition that it is well to pay some insurance premiums against the revolution is once more to the fore. Having swallowed the loot of half the world, the British governing class is considering whether it will make a dole of 3 shillings—instead of 2 shillings—a week to the children of the unemployed. In so doing, it stands, like Warren Hastings, "astounded at its own moderation."

It is extremely doubtful, however, whether this revival of liberalism and social compromise in Great Britain has any prospect of continuance. Its whole basis, after all, is a budget surplus and a revival of profits generally. The condition of the world is not such that one can possibly foresee any new period of comparative capitalist stabilization such as the period from 1924 to 1929. It is far more likely that the European crisis will drive on to war during the next few years, and that the real prospect in Britain also is of an open capitalist dictatorship.

Correspondence

Not a Personal Statement

To The New Masses:

The Pitts article seems very important to me; chiefly because it is not just a personal statement. Its attitude is becoming a reality, I know. It marks a change from the faulty, amateurish radicalism that many of us know too much about, to something genuine and indestructible. The fact that you published this piece makes me think highly of you. The young generation that you as radical leaders must lead, demand this kind of wisdom as well as courage and doctrine.

Genevieve Taggard.

Bennington College, Bennington, Vt.

The Use of Words

To The New Masses:

I liked Rebecca Pitts' article in the March 13th issue just received. It is very interesting and very timely. However, I rather think her phrase about "perception of meaning of destiny in the world" is misleading. The working class, we say, is destined to do away with capitalism, but this is not because of something pre-ordained, but because of the social forces inherent in capitalism which create "its own grave digger." It is true that we have faith in our cause, and that without faith we are weak, and that we visualize our goal, socialism, communism, the classless future; but we conceive of our goals as ideals to achieve, and not as things already existent beckoning us on. We must always be careful in our use of the words destiny, fate. Of course it may be my own obtuseness which fails to interpret that word right in Comrade Pitts' article. I repeat it is interesting, timely, and well-written. I'd be delighted to see more from her capable pen.

Tucson, Ariz. George Henry Weiss.

A Greeting

To The New Masses:

Greetings to the weekly New Masses. May it rally all that is best in America's intellectual life to the proletarian revolution.

Secretariat Communist Party of Ireland.

What Magazines Want

To The New Masses:

The other day I was called into the editorial sanctum of one of the country's best known middle-class intellectual magazines to discuss a couple of my stories. The stories were rejected, but I garnered the following general observations about fiction which may be of interest to your readers:

The struggling, starving, dying miners are "fascinating."

Their struggles and life—it seems they live a life quite apart from ours—offer fine opportunities for thrilling, exciting stories. Scraps among the miners themselves over their conflicting unions are excellent material. Miners ambushing each other, etc.

Illiterate mill workers run the "fascinating" miners a close second. It seems they really live very poorly and this is interesting. Sometimes they develop fiery leaders who get shot to death, usually needlessly, let it be remarked. This is good stuff, too.

Generally speaking, most depression or proletarian fiction (it is almost the same thing) is too gloomy, too depressing, too realistic without any point. Or it has no action to relieve it. (Screaming Jesus, I thought, can there be more than one kind of action that will "relieve" it?)

Yes, of course the editors try to keep up with what is going on toward the Left. They had lunch recently with Mr. Lovestone, and they've had some contacts with the American Worker's Party. (No mention of the straight Communist Party, THE party of the Left.) And as a result, their heads are in such a whirl with all this sectarianism, this mutual villification, that they are inclined to chuck the whole business, at least temporarily.

People of our own class (the editor's and the author's) who have been ruined or declassed by the depression, are very poor material for modern fiction compared to such venerable and classic ma-

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terial as the "fascinating" miners, the inarticulate mill hands, and possibly the chronically poor farmer. In other words, we "nice people" are supposed to "grin and bear it," and most important of all, to stick to the right side of the fence while we console ourselves with stories of the wonderfully heroic miners.

Yes, stories about middle-class people—architects, engineers, doctors, lawyers, and the like—who, upon finding themselves declassed, turn definitely and logically leftwards, are OUT. And why? Because that kind of stuff isn't *fiction,* dear fellow, it's *propaganda.* (Apparently only highly emotional half-wits go red. We people who can think clearly and coldly stay on the right side no matter how badly the depression starves our bodies and kills our souls. We'd never go out in the streets and yell for our rights no matter what happens.)

But here's the profoundest bit of all.

"There must be a lot of interesting stories in these so-called Hoovervilles!" HOWARD HAYES.

From a Pharmacist

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I am a registered pharmacist working for a cut-rate—cut-throat soda water-drug sundries and cosmetic chain organization. I passed a candy store today and your March 27th issue "struck my eye." I read "NRA—The Crooked Referee in the Auto Workers' Fight"—I bought your magazine—and spent the most interesting, most enlightening, and most educational two hours of my life reading, chewing, swallowing and digesting your NEW MASSES from cover to cover. Would that I had the time and opportunity to read and re-read to every sweating downtrodden slave in my organization your article called "Unintelligent Fanaticism"—it is one of the finest articles I ever read.

I was also one of those "wise guys" to whom the name "Communist" or "Bolshevik" meant an animal that must be destroyed—after reading NEW MASSES I shall join these "unintelligent fanatics" this week and do all I can to re-echo your constructive voice.

I cannot afford $5.00 all at once—enclosed find $1.00—I shall send you $1.00 each week until $5.00 has been paid—if you can stretch a point for a new "comrade" you can send me *The Coming Struggle for Power* when my last dollar has been paid.

M. H.

Campus Impartiality

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The University of California has taken a stand—it has presented a Fascist and refused an anti-fascist. Lord Marley, Vice-Chairman of the House of Lords, Chairman of the World Committee to Aid Victims of German Fascism, was not allowed to speak on the campus. The Vice-President of the University justifies the University's action by explaining: "If we presented an Anti-Fascist, we would show partiality." However, in the fall of 1933 Professor Richard von Kuhlmann, an ardent supporters of Hitlerism, was invited by the University to give a series of eleven lectures for the annual Hitchcock series. In these lectures on "European Economic Developments," the events of the past decade were analyzed from a Fascist point of view.

Although the president of the University, Robert Gordan Sproul, and Dean Monroe E. Deutch were both on the reception committee to welcome Lord Marley to San Francisco, no representative of the University greeted Lord Marley when he spoke off the university campus in Berkeley for the Social Problems Club!

MARGARET REYNOLDS,
Social Problems Club
of the University of California.

For Ill Workers

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The World Tourists have the special privilege of sending workers who need a rest cure to the sanatoriums and rest homes in the Caucasus and the Crimea at the extremely low price of approxiamtely $35 to $40 for a thirty-five day stay in the sanatorium or rest home. This rate includes the rail transportation from the Soviet border to the rest home or sanitorium and return to the border. Only a limited number of workers can be sent, only those who actually need the cure. Medical attention and treatment are given during the stay at no extra cost.

The World Tourists also arranges for a combination of a European tour together with a Soviet tour, including such countries as England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Poland, Norway and Sweden. The rates for these tours are execptionally low. For further information and details, apply to 175 Fifth Avenue, New York City,

WORLD TOURISTS, INC.

A Night in the Million Dollar Slums

MICHAEL GOLD

WHEN this "drama critic" was a boy growing up on the East Side, he usually spent his Friday night in the gallery of one of two disreputable burlesque houses, Miner's or the London Theatre, both on the Bowery.

Other nights, after sweating through a 10, 12 and even 14 hour day for the Adams Express Company, juggling 1,000-pound crates of machinery and the like, the author's Guardian Angel might have discovered him (had that derby-hatted, slimy-winged, double-crossing, racketeering heeler of a Tammany God ever cared) in the dirty cellar gymnasium of a Catholic church.

With his gang of 17-year old savages, here the future critic boxed, wrestled and otherwise received his "lumps." It was that period of adolescense when a healthy boy is infatuated with his own muscles and body. Your critic, during those formative years, had no higher prayer than to grow up into as good a scrapper as clean little Frankie Burns, later to become a lightweight champion, but who then labored in the same branch of the Adams Express as our hero.

Our author, little knowing he literary fate before him, had also no use for books. He hadn't read one since graduating from the same public school as Gyp the Blood, a gunman of yesteryear. The author laid the foundations of his culture by studying the sporting pages, and as a faithful weekly worshipper of the chorus line in the burlesque houses aforenamed.

The admission to the gallery of these theatres was 10 cents. There were no seats, only tiers of splintery wooden steps to sit on. One went with one's gang, because there was always sure to be some serious fighting. The squads of gallery bouncers earned their pay; for the roughneck audience always made it a point of honor to see how much one could get away with. They yelled insults at singers and dancers who did not please them ("You stink!" was a favorite critical epithet); they threw beer bottles or took a punch at neighbors who had offended them by daring to exist in the same world.

After the show the boys often drank a great many beers, and some continued their education by visiting one of the numerous Tammany temples of feminine physiology where the admission was fifty cents. Well, it was all sordid, physical, brutalizing, but it was all we knew, and there was some fun and vitality in it, anyway. At least it did not pretend to be anything it wasn't; and no chattering slummers like Gilbert Seldes as yet had come from Harvard, and Santayana, and Matisse and Gertrude Stein, to discover this gutter life, and deepen its degradation by that foulest of all bourgeois degeneracies, the aesthete's delight in the "picturesque" side of mass poverty.

With these introductory remarks I will confess to having attended recently a performance of the Ziegfeld Follies. The intellectual drama critics of New York have surrounded these shows with a great deal of glamor; they write of such Broadway spectacles with high aesthetic seriousness: it is obviously a drama critic's duty to appraise these revues; and for the sake of THE NEW MASSES, I went to one.

Report: There was an underwater ballet, à la poor dead Pavlova, with a sweaty baritone singing a sentimental ballad on a bridge. The fake waves shivered, and there was pseudo-Egyptian music. Then a young Broadway imitation of a man, a hoofer with patent-leather hair, hoofed it with a good-looking chorine and sang a fake love ballad, with a refrain something like this: "I Like the Likes of You." The chorus came on; 50 athletic girls in silver hats and gold pants. They danced and sang something. Another hoofer danced a few variations on the old buck-and-wing that only a Negro boy knows how to dance; all others are bleached and tasteless imitations of the real thing. A satire on the country "tryout" theatres so numerous last summer; the chief humor being about the fact that the farmer sells both tickets and eggs; also some cracks about a nudist colony, and the key to the outhouse.

One good line: "This is a society play, no belching here, just rape and adultery."

Climax: "I want you to meet my hus-

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band": and the heroine lifts a window and reveals the rear end of a horse.

Song: A tall drugstore blonde in white rayon decorated with a large gold cross sings a sob song about "suddenly" being a stranger to the man she loves, and 50 good-looking broads in gold and silver and platinum dresses suddenly dance on and sing and dance the same song, "Suddenly."

Another sappy love duet by another patent-leather hair hoofer and girl; then another big blonde beauty with a hard face comes on and struts around exhibiting *her* rear end. A brisk young Englishman delivers a monologue, in the old stammer style; a few good lines: "America as a nation is too laxative"; "While one is keeping the wolf from the door, the stork flies in"; "Yes, you are a great nation, you have built yourself up from nothing to a state of extreme poverty"; and there was a Barber College Glee Club, which sang a really funny oratorio, pretentious and solemn, on the theme of "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf." During this, the chief comedian kept looking down into the beefy breasts of one of the lady singers, weighing them with his hands, etc. (Laughter, applause.)

The chorus appears, dressed in another variation of gold and silver; some humor about homosexuals in a Greenwich Village scene; five more repetitions of the stale young love and hoofing duet; a skit about George Washington and the cherry tree; the reviewing stand of a New York parade, with a trace of satire: "It was seven lawyers who covered Wiggin"; then that good old clown Fanny Brice as the Countess Olga sings sadly about her lost grandeur in Russia, and how now she has been reduced to doing a nude fan dance in Minsky's burlesque show; then a false sentimental pacifist song, "You got sunshine, you got life, why must you fight and die?" etc; and a male dancer in a gold trench helmet and gold tights waving a gold flag at the climax; more chorus girls in tinsel, silver and gold, again and again, trotting on and off.

"You're so lovable, you're so kissable, your beauty is so unbeatable, to me it's unbelievable," they sang, and a chorus boy dressed in gold satin and lace of a priest married them in front of Franklin Simon's upper-class department store, and there was a Maxfield Parrish art tableau to follow, and the tall, mean, slouchy blonde truthfully sang to the audience:

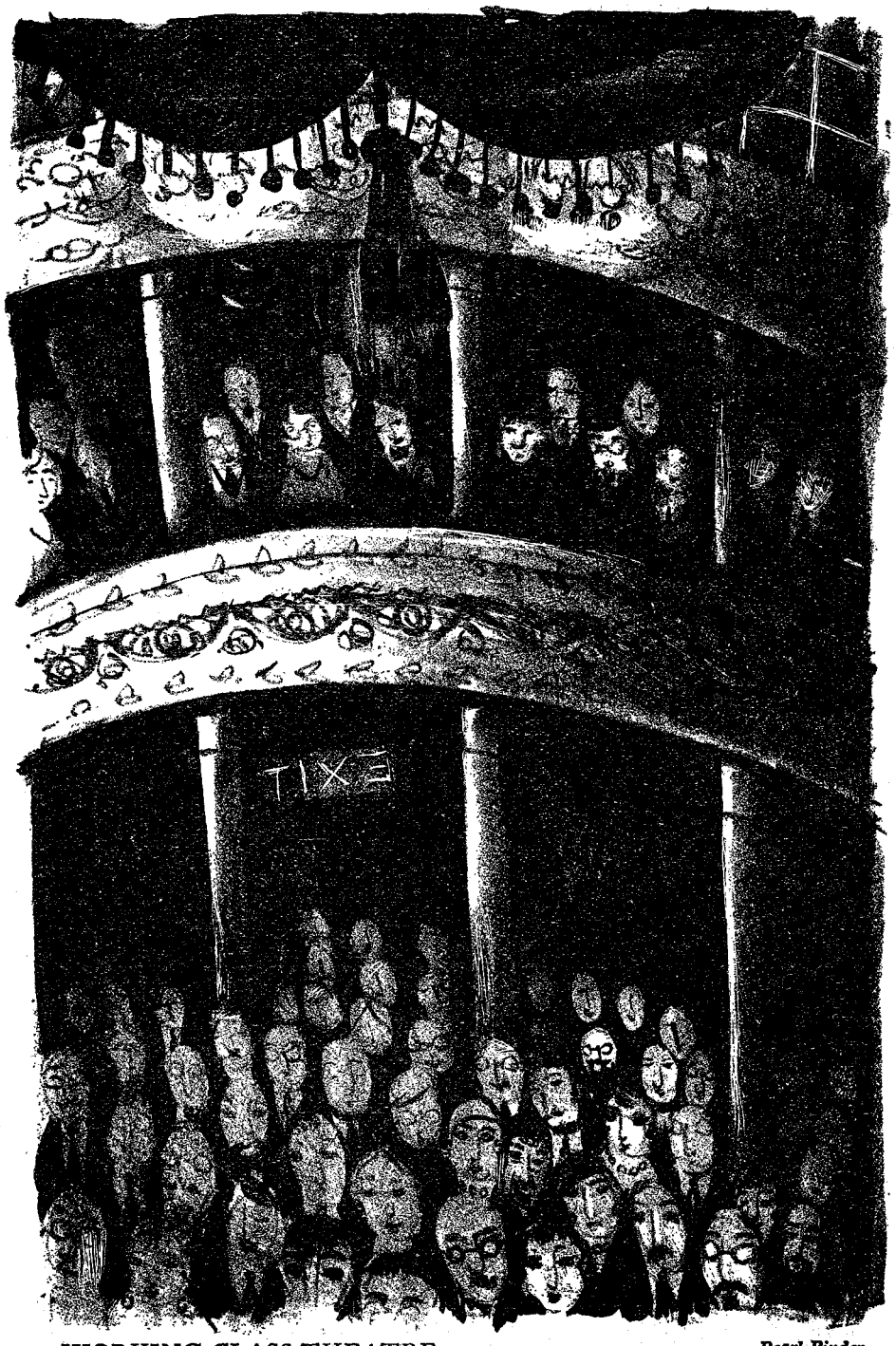
> You're still seduced
> By marcel waves
> And not by
> Marcel Proust

In the audience one sees all the big sellers and buyers of New York and the Tammany lawyers and Yale-Harvard boys and their enameled sweethearts; and business Napoleons with severe horse-faced wives from the suburbs; Saturday Evening Post writers (in the chips), stock brokers, politicians, clothing bosses, heywood brouns, hotel owners, sheriffs, on visits from Georgia and Montana; race track bookies; high powered steel salesmen and shoelace promoters; white shirt fronts, evening gowns; cold, beautiful, empty faces, vivacious dumb faces; hard empty male faces, senile old rounder faces; young sleek worthless faces; the faces of those who "succeed" in New York—New York, to which all the successful exploiters and parasites of America come once a year to see the Follies.

This is the peak of their art and culture. The show I saw was no better or worse than all the other shows of its kind. In fact, it was the same show with a few variations. It was the same show, more or less, that I once saw as a boy for ten cents on the Bowery; and many of the jokes had not even been changed for this audience, though some of them paid $6.60 for their seats.

On the Bowery we had access to nothing better; but these people had every door to life open and could have made a deliberate choice. And this was their choice, this brainless, soulless parade of sterility. This was what they wanted, and it was given them. It was beautiful in its overlavishness, its vulgar parvenu attempt at gold and silver luxury. In this glittering temple a smelly corpse was being worshipped. The audience did not believe in its own laughter; the actors in their own performance. It all meant nothing. It did not amuse. It was inhuman as any robot. Its satire was that of the coward avoiding any politically dangerous theme; its sensuality that of the courtesan; false love, false music, false golden glamor.

This bourgeoisie form of art for art's sake is no longer worthy of one's comment or attack. It has only one useful purpose that I can still see: it numbs the minds of the exploiters. Let them continue to support it and be stultified. But I hope they raise the pay of the chorus girls, who, poor kids, are as skillful, disciplined, and overworked as the men on Ford's conveyor belt.



WORKING-CLASS THEATRE — *Pearl Binder*

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IN NEW KENTUCKY

A PLAY BY

SAMUEL ORNITZ

ACT ONE

(Seven Scenes)

SCENE 1

A MOUNTAIN TRAIL (A drop in one; indicating a boulder pass at extreme Right.)

The background suggests the vague blue daybreak heaven which turns to a smoky orange as the sunrise works through the soft coal smoke coming from cabin and colliery chimneys down in Coal Creek. It is early December. The mountain shrubs glisten with frost.

A single file procession starts from Left and moves up the trail. The leader is a small man with one leg and a homemade crutch: CALEB POUNDS, *an industrial casualty.*

Behind him walks: MARTIN CROMWELL, *a lanky coal miner with a lean face. Under his arm, resting on his hip, is a small homemade coffin. The coffin digs into his side because the dead load of a child weights the coffin.*

Next comes his wife: NANNIE CROMWELL, *who walks on bare feet, with head high, as though grief were a tower. Nannie is young and gaunt. Her face is like parched earth. Her lines are as straight as the lines of the coffin. She is only twenty-two. But everything about her is old. Except her hair. Her hair is abundant, bright, girlish. Its warm fertility is as strange as a flowering hedge around a piece of dead earth.*

Following Nannie is a shriveled old woman: FLORA RICHARDS, *called* AUNT FLORA. *She is a coal miner's widow. She is the midwife of Coal Creek; also its undertaker, lay preacher, lay doctor, and minstrel. She looks like a sleazey skinful of bones. But her walk is spry, her way eager, her look hopeful.*

Behind her strides her tall good-looking skinny son: DAN RICHARDS *with a moony look in his eyes. He is a coal miner and because he is in love his face is clean.*

Then come two brothers: ANDY WEATHERS *and* LEE WEATHERS. *They are both pretty drunk but manage to keep the line. They are big, rawboned men in their thirties. They walk with the cautious stoop of men who work in low tunnels.*

Next is a miner of about twenty-two: MEL HERRIN *known later as* RED NECK. *His face is as tight and burnished as hammered brass. His face is raised to the sky. He is praying.*

Behind him walks his wife: MARTHA HERRIN. *She is eighteen. Her face is like sunbaked clay.*

The others in the procession are: HEN BRIDGEHOUSE, *miner, sixty;* MOLLY PETERS, *widow, forty;* HARLEY WATTERSON, *miner, fifty;* GROVE RALEIGH, *miner, nineteen;* HESTER RALEIGH, *his wife, nineteen;* JULIE BRIGHT, *twenty-two,* HARRY BRIGHT'S *wife.*

They are of Anglo-Saxon stock (with a flavoring of Cherokee blood), descendants of the pioneers who broke this wilderness. But twenty years ago, they owned, farmed and hunted these Kentucky ridges. It was a tough land to till and so it wasn't taken from them. But when coal was found, the land was taken from them and they themselves were taken from tillage to dig and blast the coal out.

Today, 1931, they are hunger-shrunk. They wear a convict's uniform: a blue drill jumper and blue drill jeans. Their women also wear a convict's garb: a washfaded cotton slip. The men wear heavy brogans while the women go barefooted.

The funeral file moves up the trail. No one speaks, no one weeps. But there is a groaning sound of agony: the labored puffing of a locomotive that is dragging a long freight train up the mountain. The ground throbs, the air shudders. Between puffs the locomotive's bell tolls with a machine beat.

Caleb, the cripple, leads the file into the pass. The locomotive's steam whistle shrieks, then it trails off in a whooing moan. The procession disappears into the pass. The engine's bell tolls nearer. . . . Count five tolls on an empty stage, then—

Blackout

SCENE 2

A MOUNTAIN GLEN. Two miners are at work digging a small grave. Inside the grave stands TOM HERRIN, *Mel's father, who is working with a coal pick. Tom is about fifty but looks aged, his hair being white and his face cracked and shrunk like old leather. He uses the pick like a claw.*

Above him, waiting on a fresh mound of earth and resting on his coal shovel, is HARRY BRIGHT, *a miner of about twenty-five, tall and shambling. He wipes the sweat off his face smearing more soot over it. His pale blue eyes shine like sapphires in little pockets of muck.*

The locomotive's sounds come through clearly: the tolling bell and the whooing steam whistle.

TOM: (*as he stops clawing*) Guess she's deep enough. (*straightens up*) Guess critters

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jist couldn't git hungry enough to want to dig up a little flux body.

HARRY: They'd git small nourishin from yan little sack o' bones.

TOM: Aunt Flora lays even worms wouldn't tech a flux corpse.

HARRY: Guess not. (*he pulls Tom out of the grave and then jumps in with his shovel*)

TOM: (*seats himself on the piled earth, scans the sky*) Shore makin' a fine pretty day.

HARRY: (*shoveling*) I crave the sun on a buryin. (*a pause*)

TOM: Guess little Billy's next.

HARRY: Guess anybody's next.

TOM: Guess so. No pint to him livin nor anybody.

HARRY: Guess not.

TOM: He aint tasted mulk sence he was weaned three year back.

HARRY: Poor kids—they think pigs give the mulk (*chuckles*).

TOM: (*chuckling*) Yis, Billy suck lard off his Maw's finger like it was a tittie. They crave fat like a coon-kitten in the Spring, the kids.

HARRY: Oh, Billy's all right. Looks all right, don't he?

TOM: Bowels bleedin. Flux all right. (*spits*) You hate to see a born jester tooken off.

HARRY: He's the laughingest kid, shore. (*Harry shovels. Both men brood. The ground throbs, the air shudders. The freight train is nearing the summit. The tolling bell is quite near.*)

HARRY: (*stops shoveling*) Jist you listen to it.

TOM: Like the church was a-climbin the mountain. (*The locomotive sounds its steam whistle, like a trailing vapor cloud—a pause*) Kentucky's gittin a good riprisentin up thar in Heaven. (*The whistle once more wails whimperingly.*)

HARRY: I'm a three cornered sonofabitch.

TOM: That's rare cussin.

HARRY: It makes my bowels boil like Jeremiah himself.

TOM: Boil, Jeremiah.

HARRY: You can chase this divil flux like a charm—with a mouthful of mulk, an agig, a turnip—

TOM: Yea-a, shorely.

HARRY: Jist takes nothin at all to cure a death disease. (*he spits*) Puts a mighty temptin on a feller. (*rests on his shovel*) I aim to git some of the boys togither an break into the A. & P. They don't have gun thugs a-guardin like the company store.

TOM: Quiet, man. My but you're in a swamp o' sin—lustin first and now for stealin.

HARRY: You wouldn't steal to keep your born jester from his early gravebed—man!

TOM: Git yan side o' me, Beezlybub! (*he spits*) Harry, this second sin is begat by the first. (*Harry grunts*) Everybody sees you a-sniffin the only fatted rump in Coal Creek—Emmy Burns.

HARRY: Everybody better mind their own business.

TOM: Seems like a-dul-terry calls for public stonin in the Bible.

HARRY: Oh shet your ol gizzard.

TOM: (*meditating*) Thar's Julie, your wife—so pretty once. (*sighs*) Hunger shorely shrinks the best parts of a woman. (*he spits*) Reckon the only time a miner's woman gits a figger is when she's big with kid.

HARRY: You're a dadburned pest—leave Julie out of it.

TOM: You'll be a pappy in a month.

HARRY: Oh, you gabble like an ol midwife.

TOM: It's high time you quit fornicatin around with the foreman's daughter.

HARRY: Don't throw stones jist because you're too dried out to sin.

TOM: I'm agin it because it aint straight sinnin.

HARRY: What's that? Straight—sinnin.

TOM: Layin with Stinker Burns' daughter is the worst kind of finkin.

HARRY: You're full of ol age.

TOM: Dad-divil you!—Julie 'ud be a sight purtier than Emmy if she had a fair spell of full-eatin. Man, you cant stack measly pinto beans an bull-dog gravy agin rich sow-belly an greens! (*he watches Harry shovel doggedly*) Another thing, Harry—aint you a-standin in Dan's way? I hear say Emmy prefirs him—or is thar room for the two of you on her prime rumps.

HARRY: Oh shet up.

TOM: I hate finkin—even in the hay. (*Harry shovels dirt out viciously. Tom rises as he sees the funeral procession come into the glen*) Well, here they come. (*The mourners gather around the grave.*)

MARTIN: (*placing the coffin on the piled earth*) I'm mighty thankful to you, brothers.

CALEB: (*swinging on his crutch to Nannie's side*) Like this glen, Nannie?

NANNIE: Caleb, I thank you. (*as she watches Harry shoveling*) Shore taint company ground?

CALEB: Well, Nannie, you know the mountains an evythin belongs to *some* company.

NANNIE: She's dead, May Lou. I dont want her to belong to no company even dead.

CALEB: Nannie, thar's nothin a company can want here. Thar's no coal. An the timber's tooken. They'll never disturb May Lou here.

MEL: Not till the generations grow new timber.

TOM: Our dead's nothin but manure.

MARTIN: They cut my pay ten year for burial. They cut my pay ten year an my kid gets a bird's buryin in the scrub.

NANNIE: They cut your pay ten year for a doctor. An your kid died without the doctor.

MARTHA: The doctor saw the funeral pass and he said, "Did that kid finally die an git out of the way?"

MEL: (*addressing heaven*) "I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites." (*Aunt Flora kneels beside the coffin, lifts the lid off.*)

TOM: Mel, son, you got the right Bible but the wrong Geography. Kentucky is Canaan, brothers and sisters. Pharaoh's companies came to Canaan and made us slaves all over again.

AUNT FLORA: (*speaking to the dead child*) Honey, point your finger to Kentucky. Say,—Dear Lord, look at Kentucky, please Lord.

AD LIB: Lord look at us. Look at Kentucky. Look at the nail prints in our hands. Look, Lord!

AUNT FLORA: (*invoking the dead child*) Forgotten of the world, forgotten of the Lord, the workers.

MEL: Rimimber us, Lord.

TOM: Brothers, sisters—poverty is sin an damnation.

AUNT FLORA: (*rises, lifting her arms high*) O Dear Jesus, we're so used to death in these here Kentucky coal hollers, how do we yit mourn?

AD LIB CHORUS: Have pity, Jesus.

AUNT FLORA: This passel o' flesh. What was May Lou's sin? To be born the kid of a worker?

AD LIB CHORUS: O Lord!

AUNT FLORA: O dear God, you sent May Lou to us. She was as pure purty a patch of earth as ever we did see.

AD LIB CHORUS: O Jesus!

AUNT FLORA: Red an fertile. An we give her back to you. Black an scorched. Forgive us, dear Jesus. (*As Aunt Flora incants, buxom Emmy comes on, swinging her hips, consciously wenchy. She is very well dressed in contrast to the drab miners' women. Harry and Dan watch her eagerly.*)

AD LIB CHORUS: O forgive us, Jesus.

SIMULTANEOUSLY

HARRY: Shore glad to see you, Emmy.

DAN: Howdy, Emmy.

EMMY: Hallo thar, Dan.

NANNIE: Please, dear Father, spare your children—I've another kid a-comin.

MARTHA: And me, O Lord.

HESTER: Me too, dear God.

JULIE: And me, kind Jesus.

TOM: Ar' we blamin you, O Lord? NO!

AD LIB CHORUS: NO! No, Jesus.

TOM: (*excitedly . . . a Holy Roller rush of words*) We're sinners, Lord. Sinners a-givin in to the worst sin yit—mortal a-feared of that divil company.

AD LIB RESPONSE: That divil company.

TOM: (*swaying, gesticulating*) A-feared o' his min'ons. His gun thug diputies. His demon snappers an pushers.

AD LIB RESPONSE: Yea-a.

TOM: His finks and sucks. His engineers an foremen. His bookkeepers an damnation lucre the scrip.

AD LIB RESPONSE: O! Lord!

EMMY: (*shouting—breaking the religious fervor*) Ar'nt you jist terrible!—callin the Company the Divil!—when you should be down on your hands and knees a-thankin the Company for housin an feedin you!

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Phil Bard

TOM: You're the true foreman's daughter all right.

MEL: Lit's git down on our hands an knees an thank the ol Divil Company—for starvin us!

AD LIB CHORUS: Yea-a-a!

CALEB: I'm crazy thankful for the laig they cut off me—to save a dollar fifty on a car brake.

MEL: Yea-a-a—we're mighty thankful to the Company store for robbin our wage.

EMMY: Mel, the Company'll shore like to hear all this.

MEL: You'll shore not forgit to tattle.

DAN: Not Emmy. You wont, Emmy?

MEL: She's Stinker Burns' girl.

EMMY: Shore! I'm Joe Burns' girl. We got the best of it. You all know that much.

TOM: Cant you rimimber when your pappy was a mucker like the rist of us?

EMMY: He's the foreman now—(*chuckling*) because he's smart above you.

MEL: Shore—he put a price above his brothers.

MOLLY: I'm a widder—thanks to your pappy a-sparin for the Company.

EMMY: (*straight at Dan*) But I'll never be a mucker's widder. Only a fool stays a-minin.

MOLLY: Very well thin. Git you back where you belong. Fla'nt them peach-fed hams afore the gun thugs.

AD LIB CHORUS: Yea-a-a!

JULIE: An leave our men alone.

EMMY: (*laughing*) Your men. Crowbars!

JULIE: You're shorely the brazen slut—

DAN: Stop it, Julie!

JULIE: Walkin out with a married man, dad-divil you!

EMMY: Keep your man from h'antin me!

HARRY: Shet your gizzard, Julie.

EMMY: Jist crazy jealous, Dan.

NANNIE: I wish, Emmy, you'd go.

EMMY: I only come to see what you all was up to. We like to know.

NANNIE: Now you git!

AD LIBS: Grave snoop. Fink. Suck. Slut.

DAN: (*furious, standing beside Emmy, facing the mourners*) You all lay off Emmy! Unless you want to start a fight at a buryin!

AUNT FLORA: Dan—for Jesus' sake!

DAN: A bunch o' holler trash pickin on her jist because she has sperrit.

NANNIE: Danny—please. May Lou's your blood kin—

AD LIB MURMURS: Forgive this trespass, Jesus. Please God.

EMMY: (*against the murmurs, to Dan*) I wish you had a speck o' sperrit. You'd be shet o' mines an miners.

TOM: Come on, Emmy, take you home nice. It's no manners, I'm thinkin, for the killer's daughter to come to the buryin.

NANNIE: No company suck at my kid's buryin.

EMMY: Proud, aint you? Why wasnt May Lou good enough for the Company graveyard?

NANNIE: They cant have this morsel. (*turns her back on Emmy. The others follow suit except Dan and Harry*) Auntie, kindsome, lead the prayer.

AUNT FLORA: My son'll lead the prayer. Dan, your voice is sweet to Lord Jesus Christ. (*but Dan is still boiling. Aunt Flora jerks his arm*) Danny—"The Lord is my Shepherd—" (*Dan kneels beside the coffin. He lowers his head and shuts his eyes. Everyone kneels except Emmy. Harry, who is kneeling beside his wife, is watching Emmy intently; in the silence his longing for her is as unabashed as if he were alone with her. The others are lost in silent prayer, their heads bowed.*)

JULIE: (*whispering*) Dont look at her, Harry. It aint good to look at her like that. (*Harry shuts his eyes. He clenches his fists in a determined effort at prayer.*)

DAN: (*beginning the 23rd psalm . . .After the first line the others join in a frenzied recitative, including Emmy*)

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside still waters.

ETC.

(*The singing grows in frenzy. The mourners sway and shake, improvising harmonies, all in the hysterical manner of Holy Rollers. As the recitative rises to a Holy Roller crescendo—*)

Blackout

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SCENE 3

As the curtain rises only the left half of the drop in one is lighted. It shows a grossly magnified price list of the company store, reading:

BLUE COAL COMPANY
COMMISSARY

Notice: Scrip is cashed for merchandise only.

Pinto Beans	8c lb.
Potatoes	4c lb.
Corn meal	6c lb.
Bacon	21c lb.
Peaches No. 2.....	23c can
Lard	15c lb.

On either side of the magnified price lists stands a gun thug. The get-up of the two gun thugs, RAY MONTEL *and* BUD FLASS, *is the official uniform of the mine guards: puttees, a dark grey flannel shirt, a deputy sheriff badge, military peg top pants, a flat brimmed felt hat, a cartridge belt and a black .45 automatic in a holster.*

Miners' women come on and scan the price list; their faces become haggard with indignation. Their murmured protest is like a wailing prayer.

The second panel lights up. It shows the window of the A. & P. store. The window is filled with a magnified price list. Now both price lists are illuminated side by side. The store sign reads:

A. & P.

Pinto Beans	3c lb.
Potatoes	2c lb.
Corn meal	4c lb.
Bacon	8c lb.
Peaches No. 2.....	14c can
Lard	7c lb.

Miners' women come on and study the A. & P. price list. We hold this silent scene a moment for the comparative prices to sink in.

The lights go out.

Then Panel No. 1 lights up again. The magnified price list is gone and now we are looking into the company store. Chicken wire protects the grocery stock on shelves. An opening in the chicken wire is used for passing the groceries to the scrip purchasers. Behind the chicken wire we see Emmy and her mother, Jane. A group of miners' wives are huddled in front of the opening. The two gun thugs, Ray and Bud, are on guard duty.

JANE: (*to Hester at the opening*) You cant draw nothin today, Hester.

HESTER: Yis I can. Grove's got a day a-comin.

JANE: Rats. It's cut for burial.

AUNT FLORA: A miner's pay—burial!

GUN THUG BUD: Shet up!

HESTER: Please Jane, jist a cup of meal.

JANE: Next!

GUN THUG RAY: Next! (*Hester moves away reluctantly.*)

MARTHA: (*taking Hester's place, offering her husband's time card*) How come you upped prices again, Jane?

JANE: Git what you can git in a free country.

AUNT FLORA: Yea-a-a—free to starve.

AD LIB CHORUS: Yea-a-a! (*Joe Burns, foreman, comes on, behind the chicken wire.*)

EMMY: You-all keep still.

GUN THUG RAY: Shet your gizzard.

AUNT FLORA: Not for ten dressed up gun thugs.

GUN THUG RAY: Reckon you want to be thrown out on your ol ass.

AUNT FLORA: An I'll have one of your eyes—(*claws the air with her fingers*).

JOE: Let's see who's doin all the grousin.

AUNT FLORA: I'm squawkin, Joe Burns. Askin out loud why things is jist half at the A. and P.!

JOE: (*keeps going*) They run their business the way they like. So do we.

AUNT FLORA: How about givin the miner a run for his money! (*But Joe has kept right on and is off.*)

EMMY: Well. What'll you have, Martha?

MARTHA: (handing her card to Jane) A pound of beans. An ounce of lard. (*Emmy gets the things while Jane makes the entry in her book*) You oughtn't advantage us this way, Jane.

JANE: (*pushing the things through the opening*) Rats. you aint forced to trade here.

MARTHA: Shorely we're forced. You'll fire a man who won't take scrip. Emmy and you's always a-snoopin to see who's buyin in the A. & P. (*Martha steps away from the opening. Nannie takes her place. She hands her time card to Jane.*)

NANNIE: A tin of lard, a sack of meal, a peck of taters.

JANE: (*looks up from the book she has consulted*) Nothin today, Nannie.

NANNIE: You shore, Jane?

JANE: Martin et his credit afore you this mornin. Powder an crowbar.

NANNIE: But didnt Mart have five day a-comin?

JANE: Shorely. But how about cuts for smithin and checkweighin an doctor? Next! (*Nannie waits helplessly*) Next!

GUN THUG BUD: Get out of the way! (*Nannie drags herself away.*)

AUNT FLORA: (*taking Nannie's place*) Say, do we have to pay the doctor a dollar a month to tell us we're porely from starvin?

EMMY: Oh shut up an tell us what you want.

AUNT FLORA: I yanked you into the world head fust—and how you doubled on me!—kickin me in the teeth ever sence.

EMMY: Oh shet your ol trap.

AUNT FLORA: A smart midwife would of strangled you with the cord.

EMMY: What do you want?

AUNT FLORA: A lug of taters—if your Maw's Judgment Book aint got me fixed to starve. (*Emmy snatches the card out of Aunt Flora's hand. Jane gets the potatoes*) Scrip's a jail you do life in. (*Jane pushes a bag of potatoes through the opening.*)

JANE: Nobody's forced to work. You can starve, freely.

AUNT FLORA: (*moving away with her bag*) You'll soon be chargin for that.

NANNIE: (*taking Aunt Flora's place*) Jane—couldn't I have a cup of lard till tomorrow?

JANE: (*slamming the chicken wire wicket shut*) No tick. (*Jane and Emmy leave.*)

NANNIE: Sweet Jesus, what ar' we a-goin to do?

AD LIB CHORUS: Sweet Jesus. (*The shrill blast of a colliery whistle. Other collieries take up the strident summons to the workers. They shriek together, continuing through the Blackout.*)

AUNT FLORA: A bunch of women like a bunch of sick cats. (*she spits*) Whimperin to Jesus. (*violently gestures towards the cacophony of steam whistles, her voice rising*) Do you hear them mine crows an buzzards! Cawin—screechin for our men! Into the bowels of the earth! To bore an blast an shovel with their bellies stuck to their backbones!

AD LIB CHORUS: Yea-a-a!

AUNT FLORA: All we do is snivel to Jesus. He's right to despise an abandon us. Us women has got to do somethin!

AD LIB CHORUS: Somethin? What?

AUNT FLORA: I wish I knew. Somethin!

AD LIB CHORUS: Somethin. Somethin!

GUN THUG BUD: (*mocking a woman's voice*) Somethin. Somethin, Ray.

GUN THUG RAY: (*also mocking*) Somethin. Oh somethin, Bud. (*The two gun thugs laugh loudly. The women have started out. They exit as if urged by a cohering current. At left exit they are a tight mass, moving as one. The gun thugs' laughter continues.*)

Blackout

(*The screeching of the factory whistles continues through into the next scene.*)

SCENE 4

A Magnified Monthly Statement Painted on a Drop.

(*This is the statement the mine operators give the miners. It is printed except for the items entered in ink.*

The statement is to fill the proscenium so that the facts may stand out in their massive cruelty.

The colliery whistles continue to screech off scene.)

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No. 6 Mammon, Ky. 2—1—31

BLUE COAL COMPANY
In Account With

Name—Tom Herrin

Charges		Credits	
Store	9.00	604 Tons at .04	24.16
Rent	5.00	Hours at	
Light	1.00	Car Checks Ret'd	
Powder	2.00	Yards at	
Doctor	1.00	Transfers	
Insurance	2.00	Cash Retained	
Sick Fund	1.00		
Burial Fund	.80		
Hospital	1.00		
Smithing	.60		
Checkweighman	.30		
	23.70		
Bal. due Workman	.46	Bal. due Company	
Total	24.16	Total	24.16

Retain This Statement

(On either side of the statement the gun thugs, Ray and Bud, stand on guard.

We hold this drop for a full moment to let the facts sink in. Then miners, in single file, pass before the drop. They are on their way to work, their lamps in their caps, carrying picks, shovels and other tools; silently they trudge past, a weary looking starved lot of men. As they slowly move across the stage, off scene we hear women's voices singing dolefully against the colliery whistles.)

Women's Voices: (*singing*)

Please dont go under those mountains with
the slate hangin over your head.
Please dont go under those mountains with
the slate hangin over your head.
An work for jist coal light an carbide and
your children cryin for bread—

(*The miners' coal-caked brogans drum an accompaniment to the mass singing.*)

Blackout

SCENE 5

A MINE PASSAGEWAY. Low and wide. with a jagged roof of slate and coal supported by timbering and slate columns.

The flares in the miners' caps afford a lurid illumination. Vast convulsive shadows are thrown by the movements of three miners who are shoveling coal into a mule car. Other miners are walking through.

From off-scene come the voices of a number of women singing.

The walking miners stop, turn and listen. Then the shoveling miners stop to listen.

Dan: Do you fellers hear what I hear?

Mel: Yis. It's Molly's song. The Hungry Miners Blues. (*Tom enters from the shaft Left. He is followed by Martin, Harley, Grove, Lee, Andy and others. The scene is better lighted with the addition of their cap flares. The mass singing draws closer.*)

Tom: Run an head 'em off, Mel. Dont they know women in a mine means shore death for the men?

Mel: No use, Pappy. They're in.

Grove: (*as other miners pile in*) What they got to sing about?

Tom: The empty guts growls the loudest.

Lee: Women ar' crazy, the best of 'em. (*They listen in wonder as the passageway reverberates to the mass chorus.*)

Women's Voices: (*singing*)

When my husband works in the coal mines
he loads a car on every trip,
Then he goes to the office that evenin and
gits denied of scrip—

(*The vanguard of the women enter singing: Aunt Flora, Molly, Nannie, Julie, Hester, and Martha*)

Jist because it took all he had made that day
to pay his mine expenses.
A man that will work for coal light an
carbide aint got a speck of senses.

(*Women crowd in after them, singing. They mass around the coal car. Then come a half dozen men—the lame, the halt and the blind who are stay-at-homes like the women. They flank the women, front stage. The massed women face the massed miners. The song continues*)

All the women in this coal camp ar' a-sittin
with bowed down heads;
Ragged an barefoot, their children a-cryin
for bread.
No food, no clothes for our children, I'm
sure this aint no lie:
If we cant get no more for our labor we
will starve to death an die.

Tom: (*shouting against the last line of the song*) Stop this here crazy singin. Dont you know this is a coal mine or what?

Aunt Flora: (*the song is ended*) Dont know a better place to sing "The Hungry Miners Blues." (*laughter.*)

Andy: Aimin to pass the hat?

Aunt Flora: Yis. An we'd like this chain gang to throw in their leg irons. (*laughter.*)

Harley: What's all this laughin for! Women in a mine! Know what that omens?

Lee: Leave it to Auntie. She'll work a good spell agin it.

Aunt Flora: I'm workin spells agin hunger an misery.

Martin: No, brothers and sisters! Ar' we heathens or what? Why dont we pray? Mebbe this mine needs to hear God praised to let us git a livin out of it.

Ad Lib Chorus—Men and Women: Amen.

Tom: (*invoking*) Dear God, bless our work. Bless our vineyard in the bowels of the earth. As wine warms the innards of man, our coal warms his house. Please God, bless our vineyard in the bowels of the earth. Amen!

Ad Lib Chorus: Amen. Thank you, God.

Nannie: Men, you're forgittin what the Lord said—Help yourself!

Tom: Dad-bless you women—how about littin us git back to our work. That's helpin ourself all right. (*male laughter*).

Aunt Flora: Tom Herrin, you're shorely the preachinist man I know, be it graveside or tomb inside—(*women laugh*) as if this here mine aint jist your livin tombgrave—for all of you!

Ad Lib Chorus—Women: Right!

Aunt Flora: You cant work off your sin by jist yawpin to Jesus about it!

Tom: Auntie, you're blaspheemin!

Aunt Flora: Glory be! We heerd you by the gravebed of May Lou ownin your Divil—(*murmurs*) You didnt lose a minute though hustlin back into his hell—bendin your ol back to him—takin a kick in your ol backside for your pay—(*laughter*) All of you alike. Look at you.

Tom: You women aint exactly no cure for sore eyes! (*male laughter.*)

Aunt Flora: Luck an high-livin to you—I like to hear men laugh. Only you sound like the wind passin out of a starved gut (*female laughter.*)

Mel: Come on, Auntie, tech the trigger an shoot pintblank.

Aunt Flora: Dont put out no more till you can git a livin price.

Ad Lib Chorus—Women: A livin price.

Ad Lib Chorus—Men: Not a chance.

Tom: Here, here a minute. Women!

Molly: A livin price.

Ad Lib Chorus—Women: A livin price.

Tom: (*shouting*) Rats! You women always play a great game—on the sidelines.

Ad Lib Chorus—Men: Right!

Ad Lib Chorus—Women: Wrong!

Tom: (*shouting*) It's always easy—on the sidelines.

Ad Lib Chorus—Men: Try blastin!

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Yea-a! Shovelin! Loadin! (*male laughter*).

AUNT FLORA: Ar'nt you always sayin if it wasn't for your women and kids—? (*derisive female laughter.*)

AD LIB CHORUS—WOMEN: Yea-a-a!

AUNT FLORA: Well, your women give you the sack—(*female laughter*) We're firin you from this slavery! (*female laughter.*)

AD LIB CHORUS—MEN: Go home!

AUNT FLORA: Guess we'll have to bring your kids down here to pull you out.

TOM: Whoa there, Auntie! We're gittin no place; All tanglefooted.

AUNT FLORA: You can starve fightin as good as starve workin.

AD LIB CHORUS—WOMEN: Shore!

AD LIB CHORUS—MEN: Shet up!

HARLEY: Now, women—we know how you feel—dont blame you—forgit it—git you back home.

AUNT FLORA: God love you, man, what's there to git home to or for? We've nothin to cook. Nothin to mend or wash. All the clothes we got in the world is on our backs.

HARLEY: But Auntie, wouldnt we be crazy to wildcat? We could never win.

MARTIN: A mite to eat is better'n nothin, I say.

AD LIB CHORUS—MEN: Right!

AUNT FLORA: You men—kinned to Davy Crockett and Andy Jackson—nothin but a slew of company sucks. A mite to eat! (*the men howl resentment.*)

MARTHA: Shore, you don't like it.

NANNIE: Company sucks—shore.

TOM: Dad-burn you women! You know the union's gone to hell—the leaders ate up our dues in the fat days—an kissed us goodbye in the lean days—

AD LIBS—MEN: (*growling, shouting*) You'll drive us loony. Why don't you git back home? Got to have a strike fund— to strike.

TOM: Ah Auntie, these ar' lean years. An the scabs ar' so many, they'd be down on us like a plague of locusts.

AD LIBS: And how! Say, we'd be plumb crazy! Git home!

TOM: Down here in the deep dark we dont git moonstruck. We think o' the kids. Where'd they be if we walked out?

AUNT FLORA: Where ar' they now?

NANNIE: Their feet ar' on the ground. Blue with the frost. Hungry an shiverin.

JULIE: The law says kids got to be in school. But your kids aint in school. They aint got clothes to git to school in.

MOLLY: Shore, where ar' our kids? If they aint in their graves yit they'll be there quick enough from the hookworm an flux.

AD LIB EXCLAMATIONS—WOMEN: Pity us, Jesus. Have mercy, dear God.

AUNT FLORA: (*gets up on the plank fronting the mule car: she is now a little above them*) Where ar' our kids? Where's any of us? In a cabin the Company rints us. They're so rotten they're about to fall down. The wind sucks up through the floor, and sucks in through the walls, an we git plenty of pure water to drink when it rains. (*laughter*) Shore now, that's the Kentucky speerit. Laugh at misery. Die laughin. Dont die slavin. Let's hear Kentucky laugh out loud! (*laughter, in spurts, then in gales, then in torrents until it inundates the mine: suddenly it is over, the place becoming as suddenly still and dry as a desert arroyo after a cloudburst. Aunt Flora points to the contingent of industrial casualties.*)

AUNT FLORA: Say, it does my heart good to hear the lame, the halt and the blind laughin their heads off . . . Andy, this reminds me. Remember what you told me what a coal town looks like?

ANDY: When was that, Auntie?

AUNT FLORA: When you come home from the War.

ANDY: You know I aint much for keepin things in my head.

AUNT FLORA: You aint. Well, you told me a coal camp looks like a place back o' the firin lines. So many cripples.

ANDY: Think I did, at that, Auntie. Shorely does, too.

BLIND MAN: I come through the War all right—but I lost my eyes when the dust blew up number twelve. I dunno which War is the worst. (*murmurs of sympathy as he feels his way with outstretched hands*) Brothers, dont blame me for standin with the women. I be'n a squaw, you might say, ever sence I lost my labor.

PARALYTIC MAN: (*limping to the side of the blind man*) Ollie, reckon you speak for me. I lost my left side in this work war. Rotten timberin laid half the mine on my left side—an I be'n squawin my life away ever sence. Guess we larned to put the cripples with the squaws from the Cherokees.

AUNT FLORA: Bill, you find your vittles like a beggar, dont you—an the company cut you for Horspital an Insurance, didnt they?

PARALYTIC MAN: Now they did, fourteen year they did. But they was some tricky reason why I couldnt draw nuther. Nor nobody for that matter.

CALEB: You'll draw Burial .all right (*laughter.*)

AUNT FLORA: You'll all draw that. (*laughter*) Blind Ollie shore said somethin. This workin life is a war. Nothin else but. An who iver saw a war fit with prayers only! (*laughter*) Now brothers, husbands, sons—your women havent jist gone daffy. What've you—we—got for your labor anyway?

AD LIB ROAR: What!

AUNT FLORA: What! We go to bed in a bag of rags—

AD LIB ROAR: Right!

AUNT FLORA: Bull dog gravy is our meat —an our bowels ar' bleedin!

AD LIB CHORUS: Right!

AUNT FLORA: We mine fuel an freeze!

AD LIB CHORUS: Right!

AUNT FLORA: Where ar' our girls? On the highways an on the towns. Bummin rides, bummin meals.

AD LIB CHORUS: Right!

AUNT FLORA: Some of our girls'll never come home again — (*a murmurous mass moan*) God have mercy on their souls—(*a thrumming mass groan*) They didnt start out to do it. They didnt want to do it. (*women are keening and swaying*) Sometimes they come home, our girls. They come

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home with dread diseases like the mountains never knew.

AD LIB OUTBURSTS: (*prayers and curses mingling*) Pity our daughters, Jesus. Hell. We're shore a lot of hell-fired yellow bellies. Bless us to a good clean life, O Father in Heaven. I'll kill the first livin sonofabitch I lay hands on. Amen. Yis, men, we're the stinkinest kind of scissor bills—even our daughters—god damn every one of us to hell. Amen. Show me the man—I'll rip an twist his guts out for him. Jesus, see the nail prints in our hands. (*They reach Holy Roller frenzy.*)

AUNT FLORA: (*piercingly dominant*) Sinners! Sinners! (*cries, murmurs, moans subside—a hush*) In the name of the Lord God of the Host—I call your sin. (*deep silence—then Aunt Flora begins to sing the slogan line of the "Hungry Miners' Blues"—then the men and women sing it with her*) Dont load no more, dont put out no more till you can get a livin price—

MEN AND WOMEN: (*repeating the slogan line several times so as to become a mass choral defiance that reverberates thunderously through the mine*)

DONT LOAD NO MORE, DONT PUT OUT NO MORE TILL YOU CAN GET A LIVIN PRICE!

MEL: (*ringing his shovel on the slate for order—then roaring*) Walk out!

AD LIB CHORUS—MEN AND WOMEN: WALK OUT!

MEL: Down tools! (*flings down his shovel.*)

AD LIB CHORUS—MEN: Down tools! (*tools crash down.*)

TOM: Call out every mine. March on the mines.

AD LIB CHORUS—MEN: Let's go! (*they start.*)

AUNT FLORA: Women march with the men. Together, men and women!

AD LIB CHORUS—MEN AND WOMEN: Together! Men and women! (*The movement is stopped by the arrival of Joe Burns, the foreman. He pushes his way through the women; the two gun thugs help him, jostling the women and cripples roughly. A clearing forms in front of the coal car for Joe, Bud and Ray. The three men carry electric searchlights.*)

JOE: What's a-comin off down here? (*Jane and Emmy enter the clearing. They also carry electric searchlights.*)

JANE: (*playing her searchlight on the faces of the massed women*) Is it a Holy Roller?

DAN: We're strikin!

EMMY: (*playing her searchlight on his face*) You fool! Keep out of this.

JOE: Who's strikin'? Show me the hell-fired fool who wants to git on the blacklist. (*he plays his searchlight upon the faces of the massed miners.*)

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MEL: (*stepping forward*) Here's one. (*the searchlight is full in his face.*)

MARTHA: I'm proud of you, Mel!

ANDY: Here's another, foreman. (*A group of men quickly join these two.*)

AD LIBS: Tom Herrin. In! We're in. Me. Harley Bridgehouse. Hen Watterson. Me too, Martin Cromwell. Here's Lee Weathers. In! I'm in. Dan Richard's in!

JOE: (*bringing his light upon the faces of the men who hold back*) I see there's a few who's smart enough to keep out of it.

HARRY: (*among the hold outs*) Christ, I'm no yellow-belly, boys. But where will we git with a wildcat strike?

JOE: On the hell-fired blacklist. No foolin. (*to the women*) Better tell your men to git back to work.

AUNT FLORA: The women ar' standin with the men. We're sharin this fight.

AD LIBS—WOMEN: We ar'! No. No. Yis, we ar'!

JANE: They aint all crazy.

MEL: Git in, Harry

JULIE: Git in, Harry.

JOE: (*laughs*) He dont want to git on no blacklist.

HARRY: (*slowly joins the strikers*) Hell, man, I'd ruther die like a dog any time than be a fink rat. I'm in. (*cheers.*)

AUNT FLORA: Hester, git after your man. Move in Grove Raleigh.

HESTER: Yis, Grove, git in. You'd never rat on your brothers.

GROVE: (*among the hold outs*) Now listen, Hester. We got a kid a-comin.

HESTER: Is it a-comin to die of the flux? Grove!

GROVE: (*joins the strikers*) Here, I'm in. Hell shore. (*cheers.*)

AD LIBS: Grove's all right. Who wants to be a company suck? Not Grove.

SIMULTANEOUSLY

NANNIE: (*going among the hold outs*) Come on, brothers, git in.

JULIE: (*joining Nannie*) Men, you got nothing to lose.

JOE: Dont you be fools.

MARTHA: Be men.

JULIE: Be brothers.

BILL RAND: (*an old miner among the hold outs*) Ar' we a-goin to fight machine guns with squirrel guns?

MEL: They cant blow the coal out with machine guns. (*laughter.*)

COLE BARLOW: (*another hold out*) They got all the money in the world. What've we got?

LEE: Kentucky guts. (*cheers.*)

MEL: Fall in, miners. In!

JANE: I'm spottin the ringleaders all right. (*Emmy sidles up to Dan*) Mel. Lee. Tom. Marty. I got you all booked.

JOE: I'll take first-class care of the loyal men.

EMMY: (*whispering to Dan, so that her words manage to cut through the ad lib protests of "No" and "Dont".*) Dan. You be smart. Git all this good pay. Our only chance to git married.

DAN: (*pushing her away*) Git away, Emmy.

JOE: (*Shouting down the cries of "No" and "Dont"*) I guarantee the loyal men full time work. An cash pay. Git it if you're smart. Full time and cash!

MEL: Ar' you a-goin to sell out your brothers? NO!

AD LIB ROAR: NO-O!

MEL: Show Joe Burns there aint no scissor bills in Kentucky. We dont kiss no

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boss' bottom for no mess of beans an corn-bread. Hell no!

A ROARED RESPONSE: HELL NO!

AUNT FLORA: All in—make it a hun'red per cent!

AD LIB—MEN AND WOMEN: (*working upon respective hold outs: with the rhythm of a revival meeting*) Stick, brother. Stick, sister. Put in. You got nothin to lose. Nothin but your misery. Let go of your misery, man! (*the rally starts*) Here you ar' —Bill Rand's over. Here's Cole Barlow. (*cheers*) Jesus, I'm no rat. In! In! In! (*Cheers. All the hold outs have come over. The miners and their women hem in the enemy on three sides. Front stage is left clear for playing. The gun thugs draw their big black automatics.*)

GUN THUG BUD: Keep back thar.

GUN THUG RAY: Keep back!

MEL: (*thrusting himself up to the gun thugs*) Put them guns away—or we'll take 'em away!

MARTHA: (*puts herself between Mel and the guards*) Mel—

MEL: (*thrusting her aside*) Git out of the way, honey.

JOE: Mel Herrin, you'll land in jail a-threatenin' the law.

MEL: Rats! The law's workin for the divil.

JOE: (*shouting*) This is your last chance. (*screaming*) Chicago niggers'll get your jobs.

AD LIB SHOUTS: Not on your hell-fired life. Over our dead bodies.

JOE: (*shouting*) You might jist as well lay right down with your women an kids an' die because you'll never git a day's work in the mines once you're blacklisted. I give you one minute to git back to work.

AD LIBS, MEN AND WOMEN: Ruther die fust. Come on, men. Let's go, women. Go! Go! Go! GOING!

(*Cheers. They march out, waving, shouting, singing snatches of hymns, bits of "The Hungry Miners Blues" and "The Star Spangled Banner"; a cacophony of their confusion. Emmy stops Dan, pulls him aside. She argues with him, dragging him to the Right where they are sheltered by timbering and a slate column. Nearly all the miners and their women are off. Harry lingers. Julie hovers near him. Harry spots Emmy and Dan, draws near them, looks longingly at Emmy as she whispers with Dan. Joe is at Left, talking with Jane and the guards. The shouting and the singing fades away.*)

JULIE: (*touching Harry's arm*) Don't you see, Harry? She wants Dan. (*he doesn't answer*) Let Dan have her, Harry. He's not married. (*he doesn't answer*) If you wont think of me, think of your baby almost ready to come into the world—an soon callin you Pappy. (*he turns slowly and exits with Julie.*)

JOE: I'll be damned. This makes a fool out o' me. A wildcat strike—in times like this—when men ought to be eatin out o' your hands.

JANE: They'll be back, crawlin on their hands an knees.

JOE: All the good it'll do 'em. They might as well be in their graves as on the blacklist. (*to the gun thugs*) Git the Sheriff up here with eviction papers. Turn the whole stinkin lot out on the road. See how they like that.

GUN THUG RAY: (*laughing*) They wont like it much.

GUN THUG BUD: Not much. You bet. (*they leave.*)

JOE: Wire Chicago, Jane.

JANE: All right. (*they leave. The only light now comes from the flare in Dan's cap.*)

EMMY: Cant you see, honey? Dad'll take good care of you. He likes you. But he aint a-goin to let me make a fool of myself an marry into a miner's hunger life. Can't you see, honey? A mine guard gits good pay.

DAN: (*pulls away. starts for Center*) Nothin doin, Emmy. I'm a-goin.

EMMY: (*catches up with him, takes his arm—harshly*) I thought you loved me? Dont you want me?

DAN: I suppose I do.

EMMY: (*scornful*) Well, if it's jist suppose—there's someone else. Bud's askin every day.

DAN: A gun thug! Damn you.

EMMY: (*she grabs hold of his shoulders, brings her face close and speaks with vehemence*) Damn me. You'd damn me all right. Damn me to live a miner's hunger life. In a few years I'd be a scarecrow with a bunch of mangy chicks in a clapboard roost all stunk up with droppins. I want somethin out of life. If a man loves a woman he wants to give her the things she wants. He has sperrit. He has ambition.

DAN: But honey—that's what this strike's for—to git us a good life.

EMMY: You'll never git it. The Company's God Almighty. They can use work people any way they want to. The only way you can git anythin is to git over on the Company's side. Then the Company takes good care of you.

DAN: You wont git me over thar.

EMMY: Why would anybody want to be a worker! Good God, here's your chance to git free!

DAN: Ruther die than fink.

EMMY: An me, I ruther die than be a miner's wife. (*she clings to him sobbing*) An I thought you loved me.

DAN: (*puts his arms around her*) I love you, Emmy. You know how much.

EMMY: How many times you said, "I'd do anythin in the world for you, Emmy."

DAN: So I would, honey. I'd die for you, honey.

EMMY: But you wont live for me.

DAN: I wouldnt curse God for you. It's the same thing.

EMMY: (*breaks away*) That's blaspheemy. (*she sits down on the plank in front of the coal car and cries in her hands.*)

DAN: (*sits down beside her, puts his arm around her*) Emmy. Honey.

EMMY: (*raising her head*) No. No.

DAN: Stand with your man, Emmy. (*a pause*) Will you?

EMMY: (*very softly*) Hush a minute, honey. Listen. (*a pause*) It's so still here, Dan. Like we was the only two people in the whole world.

DAN: Reckon I got to go.

EMMY: You spoil things talkin like that. It's so lovely here. Warm an still. Just you an me. So still, when we talk our voices is like water. I guess it's love.

DAN: Guess so. Come on, honey, I got to be gittin.

EMMY: But I need you, honey. (*he starts to get up; she pulls him back*) Dont. Wait, Dan. I wont let you go. (*her arms close around him*) If you love me, you wont leave me.

DAN: Emmy, I got to. (*he struggles, she holds him close, bending him back.*)

EMMY: (*half over him, her face close to his*) Dan, I love you so much. I make up dreams for us two. Livin like the best. Not in a camp. In town. Wearin nice clothes. Every day Sunday. It *is* for the *smart* people. Not for workin fools. None of your cabins. A house. With the most wonderful things. A bath. A runnin toilet.

DAN: (*struggling to get up but she bears down harder on him; he cries out angrily*) If you marry me you'll perch on a crossbar like any miner's wife! Let me go!

EMMY: (*almost on top of him*) You're not a-goin. You're stayin here with me. (*she is on top of him now—he is struggling*) You belong to me. You belong to the smart people. (*she covers his mouth with her mouth, a long, long kiss during which his struggle ceases.*)

Blackout

SCENE 6

A MOUNTAIN TRAIL. (The same drop in one, as in Scene 1.)—It is sundown time. The trail is jammed with a jolly procession of miners, their wives and children. They push and shove and hustle one another as they sing "The Hungry Miners' Blues"; the tune has been stepped up by usage; no doubt the youngsters have added the jazzy lilt. A child leads the line, carrying an American flag. The kids, like the women, are barefooted and they also look like convicts, the girls wearing cotton slips and the boys a blouse and pants. Some of the women carry babies in their arms; occasionally an infant's squall joins the singing. Music helps the singers, music furnished by an old hill billy fiddler, a young accordion player and a kid with a drum. Most of the men are carrying their squirrel guns. A number of ex-soldiers wear their iron trench hats and a few display medals. About a dozen cripples are in the

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procession, the one-legged men using home-made crutches, the blind being led by children and dogs; other labor victims have empty sleeves. Everyone is thinly clad this winter's evening; a cold wind blows strongly; but everybody is singing enthusiastically as they tote bundles, sacks and bags of all sorts; even sides of bacon are carried on kids' shoulders: the effect is that of war refugees escaping with their food supplies: but joyously.

AD LIBS—MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN: (*interspersing the song; the various contingents shouting their slogans and greetings as they march on and exit into pass*) Blue Mountains IN! IN! IN! IN! IN! Hi-i-i-yi-i-i-i, Blue Mountain! Bringin fatbacks. Yay-a-a-yay fatbacks! Toll County's a-coming. Yip-a-a-yip, Toll County. What you totin, Toll County? Beans, beans, beans, beans! Beans last night, beans the night before—Gonna have beans till Kingdom Come with a big brass drum! Ar' we downhearted? NO-O-OH! Yip-a-yip, yay! Maw, maw! They aint a-yayin Jasper Holler. We're IN! Good ol Jasper. IN. In. In. IN! Three cheers for stand-up Jasper Holler. (*cheers*) What you got Jasper? Meal, meal, meal, meal, meal! Meal last night, meal the night before—Gonna have meal till Kingdom Come with a big brass drum. Strike! Strike! Strike! Strike! Strike! (*cheers*) Here's Piedmont Camp. Piedmont True-blues. Whah-ah-whooh-ooh-ray Piedmont. What you totin True-blues? Beans. Beans. Beans. Beans. Beans last night, beans the night before—Gonna have beans till Kingdom Come with a big brass drum. Yay-ay-ay-eeh. Strike—UP. Strike—UP! Strike—UP! Up—eup—eup—eup—eup-UP! (*cheers. The marchers all disappear into the pass. Off scene are heard their yells and song . . . Then Harry, helping Julie, enters. She is very heavy with child and walks laboriously. It is getting dark.*

HARRY: (*as they come to the pass*) Rist a minute, hon. Catch your breath.

JULIE: I'm a-doin fine, Harry. (*Harry starts as he hears a bob-white's whistle*) I never heard a bob-white in January before.

HARRY: One of the kids, reckon. Feel all right?

JULIE: Could do a jig.

HARRY: That's fine, hon. Reckon I ought to go back and help Dan lug that sack o' meal.

JULIE: Shore, do it, Harry. (*she enters the pass. Harry cautiously looks around. Emmy's head appears from behind the jutting boulder at far right. The singing fades away.*)

EMMY: (*whispering*) Howdy, Harry.

HARRY: (*hurrying towards her*) Emmy! (*they meet in front of the boulder.*)

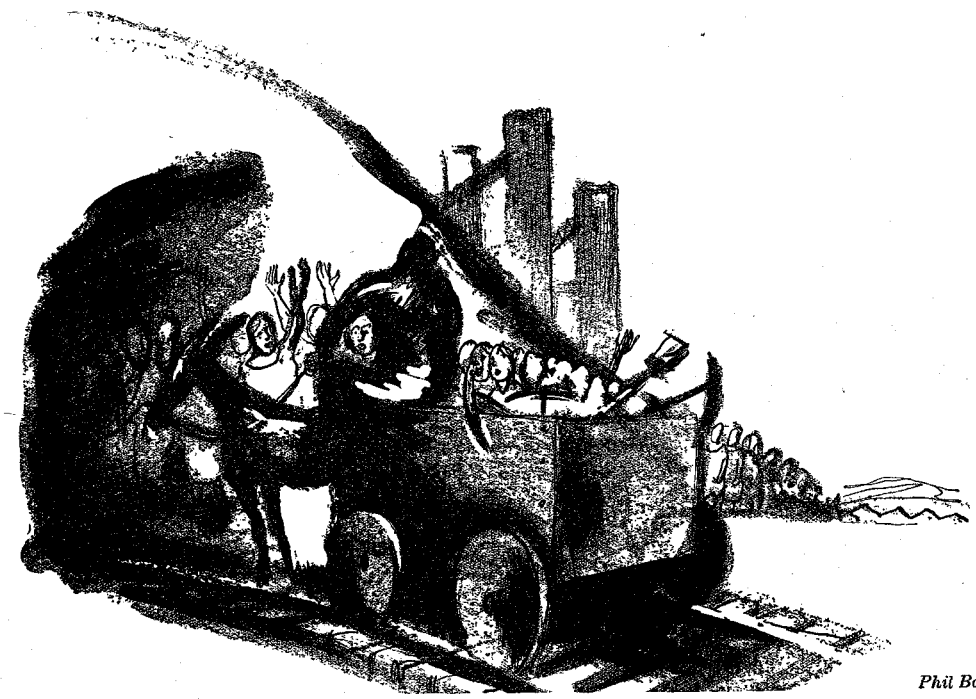
EMMY: You're a stranger, Harry.

HARRY: Reckon I am.

EMMY: How's the fool strike a-comin?

HARRY: Cant stop to talk, Emmy.

EMMY: Well, dont stop. Git along. (*as he turns to go*) See anythin of Dan? It's



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him I want to see. Not you. (*he stops, doesn't answer*) Will you tell me!

HARRY: (*slowly*) Emmy—I wouldn't even tell you what time it is.

EMMY: (*laughing*) Oh no. But you will tell me how you burn for me. An call me Song O' Songs. (*gurgles*) An beg to suck the honey offen my strawberry lips. (*gurgles*) Oh you! Honey offen strawberry lips. (*laughs.*)

HARRY: (*stares at her a full pause; then he grabs her violently by the shoulders and flings her heavily against the boulder*) Mock me! Mock me! Well—(*they glare at each other*) I'm a blue ribbon sonofabitch. Lovin' a slut like you. Yis, I burn for you. Yis, I want to suck the honey offen your strawberry lips. But lightnin cleave me in two if I will. An I'll tell Dan, I will, how you pumped me about the strike even when we was layin' togither. You whore for your Pappy. You whore for the Company. I'll slit my throat fust before I'd spill my guts to you. I wish I could kill you. Maybe Dan will when I tell him.

EMMY: (*whimpering*) Dont, Harry. Now dont. (*Harry turns and runs into the pass—Emmy pulls herself together, starts for Center, stops when she hears voices and footsteps, and hurries behind the boulder—Aunt Flora and Tom come out of the pass.*)

AUNT FLORA: You cant leave, Tom. (*she stops him by taking hold of his arm*) Man, you're gittin back to that service.

TOM: Now Auntie, please. I cant stand it. I jist got to go an see about Mel—even if it's only to bring his body back. Dont you see, Auntie? (*Martha comes out of the pass, looking around.*)

AUNT FLORA: Yis, I see us startin a new feud—an sendin to Morley after two corpses instid of one. (*as Martha comes up*) Cant you stop, Tom?—Martha, the fust thing we know this strike'll turn into a blazin feud.

MARTHA: True words, Pappy. Go back. They need you.

TOM: Martha, honey, dont you want to know?

MARTHA: I'll know—soon enough.

TOM: Reckon so. (*Dan enters from Right lugging a long heavy sack of corn meal on his shoulder.*)

AUNT FLORA: Hello, son. They'll be glad to see two hun'red poun o' corn meal come to the strike service.

DAN: Feels like two ton. (*lowers sack to ground, takes a breath*) Whew—Hiya Maw, Martha, Tom. (*wipes the sweat off his brow with his sleeve*) Tough totin, this last stretch.

TOM: You b'en down to the mill, Dan. Heerd anythin of Mel?

DAN: Yis, I did. Oh I didnt believe their crazy talk about his headin for Morley with a shovel on his shoulder, the scoop whitewashed like it was a white flag. Now that's crazy.

AUNT FLORA: Still it's true, Dan.

DAN: No, Maw!

MARTHA: Yis. Mel went to ask our blood enemy to join the strike. The shovel was—

DAN: You let him? (*gestures hopelessly*) Might as well git used to the idea—Mel's dead. Why didn't you stop him, Martha!

MARTHA: Dont you see—the white shovel was to be our flag of truce—for work-people to stop killin each other—an run their feud agin the Companies instid—dont you see?

DAN: I dont see nothin but Mel gittin plugged.

MARTHA: Mel figgered even on gittin plugged. (*the tears come and she continues bravely*) Him dead with a white shovel in his hand instid of a gun—our blood enemy jist got to wonder the meanin of it—he said.

DAN: But it's like lettin a man kill himself.

MARTHA: Not the same, Dan. For Mel was right—we cant win unless the mountains stand togither—Pappy, lit's go back to the service. We must send another white shovel a-marchin into Morley. An if we have to—

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another. Two lives, three—what's that to them that die in the mines and the women an kids that die of hunger an sickness—nothin—

DAN: It's bad enough—Mel—not another one—

MARTHA: Why not? I'm carrying Mel's kid an I let him go to Morley. I dont know—maybe I let him go because it might git somethin for our kid—(*the tears gush out of her eyes*) Pappy—will you take me to the service?

TOM: (*taking her arm, supporting her*) Shore, Martha. (*Tom, Martha and Aunt Flora start into the pass. Dan reaches down, lifts up the heavy sack, straddles it across his shoulder and starts for the pass. As he walks with his head lowered, Emmy peeks out from behind the boulder. Dan trudges to the mouth of the pass and Emmy whistles. Dan stops, looks up and sees Emmy. She motions him to come to the boulder. He goes to it, resting the sack on the rock. Dan's face is severe.*)

DAN: What do you want?

EMMY: Oh dont think I come to see you.

DAN: Reckon not. I told you enough times I dont want to see you. (*he starts to lift the sack; she stops him.*)

EMMY: Wait, Dan.

DAN: Let go o' the sack.

EMMY: Only a minute. Wont you please, honey?

DAN: I dont like you a-comin up here—for a lot of reasons. You'll git yourself hurt. I'd be the first one—if I thought you was snoopin.

EMMY: You dont know. Listen. A big bunch o' gunmen come today. An a slew of hog-butcher niggers. All lawed to hunt you strikers like rabbits in season. Oh Danny, you're gittin out of it. Yis, you ar', Danny.

DAN: Now you stop it, Emmy. You cant scare me out.

EMMY: (*clings to him*) Angel, you've got to think of me.

DAN: (*shoving her away*) I'm thinkin of a lot of people.

EMMY: (*grabbing him again*) Dan. (*he pushes her hands away*) You'll git killed. Where will I be? You've got to think of me. (*she clings hard now, sobbing; he tries to throw her off but she holds fast*) Dan. Dan. Listen. Take me to Midtown right away. We got to git married. (*the struggle stops.*)

DAN: What d'you say, Emmy?

EMMY: (*sobbing heavily*) I'm a-goin to have a baby.

DAN: Emmy! (*she sobs with her head on his chest; he holds her tenderly. A pause. Then they hear the tramp of many feet. She raises her head. The sound is nearer. She pulls Dan behind the boulder. Mel enters from Left. He is carrying the shovel that is like a white flag. He is followed by a dozen or more mountaineer miners who carry similar white-washed shovels. They march into the pass.*)

Blackout

SCENE 7

A MOUNTAIN GLEN. (The same as Scene 2.)—The curtain's rise is like a break in a dam, releasing torrents of laughter upon the audience. The shrill glee of the children is like a spray.

Hen Bridgehouse has brought his cow, Nellie, to the miners' "strike service." The miners, their women and their kids, massed in tiers upon the rising ground, packed close among the laurel, shout their laughter, slap their legs, pound each other or throw their heads back and let go. Old Hen waits patiently with his arm around Nellie's neck. Every time Nellie looks around or stirs, her iron bell rankles. Nellie is a bony dowager of a cow with a slack udder. She and Hen stand in the clearing up Front, Center, which is like a rostrum with May Lou's little unmarked grave serving as a sort of speaker's stand. Burning pine knots make the red soil of the grave mound look like freshly spilled blood. Near the grave is a bivouac of shovels the whitewashed scoops being upended. The staff of the American flag has been stuck into the bivouac. Back of the shovels are piled sacks of cornmeal, mounds of fatback bacon sides and bags of pinto beans. Mel stands a little to one side of the foot of the grave: he is presiding. The laughter rises and falls and starts again. The drummer rolls his drum. The accordion man flutters his bellows.

AD LIBS: Couldnt keep ol Nellie from the strike service. Nell's strikin too. Aint you, Nell? No more mulk till she gits her some mash.

HEN: Now dont you laugh at Nellie. She come to give herself up for a meat tithe for the strike. (*Respectful murmurs. A baby cries and is hushed.*)

MEL: We shorely thank you, Hen.

HEN: I feel like Father Abram when he was layin the knife to little Isaac's gizzard. (*a respectful hush as his words wander mournfully*) You know how it is—all the bottoms ar' tucked behind barbed wire—Nell's pasture is jist godforsook weed an stone—what she gives is dribbles of her own flesh an blood—well, she might's well turn it all in at once.

AD LIBS: Thanks, Hen. Shore man, that's puttin in. Thanks a million, Hen. Bless you. Amen.

HEN: (*offering Nellie's halter*) Will someone slaughter for me, kindsome.

HARLEY: (*taking the halter*) Git along, Nellie, girl.

HEN: Some of you hungry kids,—go along an git you the last drink from Nell's tittie. (*Youngsters squirm out of the press and scurry after Nellie. They are off.*)

MOLLY: We praise you dear God from Who all blessins flow.

MASS RESPONSE: Amen. (*A baby starts squalling. Its mother quickly opens her dress and nurses the baby.*)

MOTHER: Hush now, angel, hush. (*A young miner enters carrying Dan's heavy sack of cornmeal.*)

YOUNG MINER: Here's Dan's winter mill-in for the strike tithe.

AD LIBS: God bless Dan Richards. Amen.

AUNT FLORA: Where's Dan, Timmie?

TIMMIE: Headin for Midtown, he said.

AUNT FLORA: Midtown? What's he want down there?

TIMMIE: Dunno, Auntie.

AD LIB CRIES: Susan! Look it—Susan Pickett—a-walkin! Well! Things IS happenin! (*The entrance of Susan Pickett is a sensation. She is a frail wasted woman of about forty with white hair. She is being helped by her husband, Jack. He has his arm around her waist and she has her arm around his shoulder. In this way she manages to drag herself to the clearing.*)

AUNT FLORA: Susan! Dont tell me you clumb the mountain!

SUSAN: Seein is believin where I come frum.

AD LIBS: Praise God for a miracle. Amen.

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AUNT FLORA: God's rare wonder, Susan —you bed-rid two year! Glory be!

AD LIBS: Glory be!

SUSAN: Bed-rid, yis. But that didnt stop a load of law from dumpin me on the road.

AD LIBS: (*with groans, boos, curses*) An ol bed-rid woman. God, throw your bolts on Kentucky. Amen.

SUSAN: Well, you got to admit the Company's fair an square. They dumped us one an all on the road. (*laughter*) Yis, there I was layin with a rag a-twixt me and the frost. (*groans*) An thin I heerd you a-singin as you clumb the mountain. And do you know—it made me warm like sun an fire.

AD LIBS: Glory. Praise Jesus. Thank you, Jesus.

SUSAN: An I says to myself—Susan, if you climb that mountain they'll win that strike. (*cheers*) I'm kinder tuckered out at that. Nannie, you wouldnt mind if I risted myself here by May Lou's grave bed?

NANNIE: Oh shore, Susan, rist yourself, kindsome. (*Nannie and Jack help Susan slip to a sitting position beside the grave. Susan breathes hard and supports herself by placing an arm across the mound.*)

SUSAN: Now git on with the strike service. That's what I come for.

MEL: Reckon we all want to hear our Morley brothers say somethin.

AD LIBS: Shore! Drive ahead, Morley! (*A hush—no one stirs—then after a pause a Morley miner steps into the clearing: he is* FRANK WILSON.)

FRANK: Reckon it's up to me. Well, I shore come close to pluggin your strike preacher. But jist then the sun, a-slant as it was settin, hit his whitewashed scoop. Lord, what's that, I said—and I held my bead. Yis, that scoop shone like gold an diamonds, like the schina shore.

AD LIBS: Praise God! Helleulah.

FRANK: Well, I figgered, one good turn —so I took me over to Banning with a whitewashed shovel—(*cheers*) but I was more keerful—(*laughter*) I screamed top o' my lungs,—Brothers, git into this here strike —for Jesus sake, dont shoot—(*cheers—laughter*) Well, reckon Banning can speak for itself—What say you, Banning brothers? (*cheers. Frank returns to his group; an old miner steps into the clearing: he is* MARK RYAN.)

MARK: Er— (*coughs*) I—I never talked to sich a big congregation before in my life—well—you know about this feud business—now it's over—tryin to think how it started —seems like mebbe a hun'red year ago someone hooked a coonskin offen a palin'—(*his grin spreads to a chuckle and they all start laughing hilariously*). Reckon shore your strike preacher's got the right idear. He knows the Kentucky mountains like their feudin—(*laughter*) Well, he says,—Let's push all the little feuds togither an make One Big Feud agin the Companies. (*cheers*) Shore, shore. I'll tell you why Banning puts in. We're one hun'red and twenty-five family down in our camp an we average seven kids dead a week from the flux.

AD LIBS: (*groans and curses*) Pity us, Jesus. God, have mercy.

MARK: Thar's only one reason why our kids die. Because we cant nourish em. Now take me—the last day I worked—I put in ten hour an chalked eighty-six cent—an they scrooged off thirty-three cent for cuts—which left me fifty-three cent—in scrip—which means I got me two bit for ten hour. (*Boos, groans, curses.*) Yis, sir. That's what. An' I say—any man who'll make a man work for that is cursed by God. (*Cheers*) An' I say —any man who'll work for that is TWICE cursed by God. God damn him!

AD LIB CHORUS: God damn him!

AUNT FLORA: (*steps into the clearing*) Yea man, a holy cussin' out shore does the heart good. (*laughter*) Now, friends, git this much straight—grub is a-goin to win this strike. Grub—an something else . . . Not that your women cant handle a gun—(*cheers*) Meanwhile your women'll worry about the grub. The way I begin to see things—workpeople is one big family—or you might say —one big army. Soldiers got to eat. Thar's some way we can make our little go a long way—by cookin' in one family pot an' eatin' jist one meal a day. Now, boys, lit's see you pull your belts tight. (*Men jokingly tug at their belts.*) Strangle that ol' ornery belly an stop this dad-blessed growlin.

MEL: Shore 'nough, Auntie—you got sense —sometimes. (*laughter*) The women's got their job. Our job is to put in a full workday a-picketin' each an' every tipple.

NANNIE: I hope us women aint jist a-goin to watch.

MEL: No, ma'm—you'll be doin what you're so all-fired good a-doin—jabberin—(*laughter*) Shore. Women'll picket women —talk em out of cryin their men back to work. (*the women cheer*) An' kids'll picket kids. Make em forgit such a onnecessary thing as eatin. (*laughter*) Shore kids—play your strike games—play you're picketin —beatin up scabs, finks, sucks. (*the children whoop and cheer*).

AD LIBS—CHILDREN: You bet, Mel. Shore, man. (*cheers.*)

MEL: Kids, you'll win the strike. Women, you'll win the strike. I think us men git only as far as our women an kids lit us go. (*Cheers; the drummer drums, the fiddler fiddles, and the accordion man blasts his bellows. Then there is silence as they notice flitting white glare-spots upon the rocks near the entrance to the glen; lookout Grove runs into the clearing.*)

GROVE: It's High Sheriff Bill Henry an a bunch of law thugs. (*Quickly they make the women and kids get behind the men. The men with rifles make a front line with their guns cradled on their left arms. A full moment of silence. . . . The Sheriff is Bill Henry, a big, broad man. He is accompanied by about ten men who all wear the regulation getup of company guards. Keeping step with Bill Henry is a shortish, squattish man, an Italian. They march into the clearing, followed by their gang. One of the gang carries a sizeable wooden sign nailed to a long post. The Italian, called "Chicago" Joe, carries a submachine gun as do the other swarthy gangsters.*)

BILL HENRY: (*affable*) Reckon you dont know you're trespassin. You're warned off. Here, give me that sign. (*The sign is handed to him; he stands it on its post near the head of the grave, draws his heavy automatic out of its holster and uses it as a hammer to drive the post into the ground. Then he steps aside and the sign is visible:*

PROPERTY OF THE BLUE COAL CO.
KEEP OFF!
TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED
FULL EXTENT OF LAW.

Susan Pickett seems to have fallen asleep on the grave.)

Phil Bard

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MEL: (*reading the sign*) "Property of the Blue Coal Company." Yis, man, that's a fittin headstone for a worker's kid.

CHICAGO JOE: (*a Chicago mug's accent*) Who told you you could plant a body here? Get it outta here.

AD LIB CRIES—MINERS AND WOMEN: Let the dead rist. Shame. No. No. For Jesus Sake. Dont!

CHICAGO JOE: (*roaring*) Aw shut up.

GANGSTERS: Shut up, youse.

CHICAGO JOE: Do you see this—? (*He strokes the magazine of his sub-machine gun.*) Back talk is liable to make it go off. (*the gangsters laugh*) Ever see one of these babies before? It's a chopper. It chops you down like nobody's business. (*He laughs and his stoogies laugh with him.*) Now listen—I wanna tell you hill billy jagoffs somethin for your own good. Say, I'm a union man myself—(*to the gangster stooges*) Aint I, boys?

GANGSTERS: Yeah. Walkin delegate.

CHICAGO JOE: Yeah. This is on the up-n-up. If you know what I mean. I hear you hill billies can't even talk English. (*his men laugh*) But on the level—I'm a union man. I got a card in the Chicago Slaughter House Union, Local Eleven. But is this a time to strike? I ask you as one union man to another—is this a time to strike? If you understand English—No! You got an awful crust—toinin down woik and strikin when people is standin in breadlines. (*there is a spontaneous outburst of laughter from the miners, their women and kids: they shake with laughter*) Shut up! (*to his men*) Whatta you gonna do wit a mob of popoffs what cant talk English? (*addressing the miners again*) So it's funny—

MEL: Shore is, man.

MINERS' CHORUS: Shore, man.

CHICAGO JOE: What's dis—an act?

MEL: Stranger, we'd be mighty obleeged to you if you'd start a breadline in these parts. (*The miners love this sally; they howl.*)

CHICAGO JOE: (*winking, to his men*) He's wowin' 'em, ain't he? *Obleeged.* How's that for English? (*To the miners*) Now I'll tell one. Now listen good. There ain't gonna be no strike. See? You're all gonna punch the clock tomorrer mornin like good little boys. Get it?

MINERS: (*roaring*) No!

CHICAGO JOE: (*raging*) Okay, if you don't wanna work, we got a bunch o' boogies what WILL work. Nice Chicago niggers. Bad niggers. Tough niggers. And with us backin' 'em up—wit dese nice choppers. Can you understand dat much English?

MEL: Man, try an' larn OUR language. "Afraid" aint in it.

CHICAGO JOE: (*raging*) I'll LARN you, you monkey! (*He tilts his machine gun up—the miners' front line becomes alert.*)

BILL HENRY: (*quickly pushing down Joe's gun*) Jist a minute, diputy—warn 'em off fust—an' if they refuse, you can shoot. That's the law.

MINERS—AD LIBS: The law . . . Jesus! Fine diputy—a gangster! Chicago gangsters—that's the law for you!

CHICAGO JOE: Screw outta here—and dig your lousy stiff outta here, too.

MINERS AND WOMEN—AD LIBS: God burn you—you skunk. A baby! My baby! God damn you!

CHICAGO JOE (*raging, swinging his gun as if spraying them*) Aw—in your hat—shut up—don't get outta line, you stoonks—I'm boss here—don't forget—you keep away from the mines—don't try none of dat picketin' stuff around me—I'll blow you to hell so fast—you're up against Chicago Joe, you hill billy shits—now scram—screw—you hear!

MEL (*turns his back on Joe, talks to the massed people*) Git the women an kids down the back trail. (*Women and children begin to leave, going over the crest, disappearing back stage. Jack Pickett goes to the grave, kneels and tries to rouse Susan. Some of the women and children wait for him.*)

JACK: (*rising; his face stricken*) Reckon Susan's gone to a better land.

AD LIB MURMUR: (*hats come off*) God rist her soul. Rist in the arms of Jesus. Amen.

(*Jack lifts her up in his arms and carries her off, murmuring a prayer.*)

AUNT FLORA: (*thrusting through the line of riflemen*) You'll need help with all this grub. (*She bends down, tugs at a sack of meal, gets it to stand against her leg.*)

CHICAGO JOE: Everythin stays right here. Put it down!

AUNT FLORA: Put down nothin. It's our stuff, dadburn you!

CHICAGO JOE: Oh yeah! It belongs to the Company now. (*laughs*) Sheriff, tell dis crummy dame the law.

BILL HENRY: Well, boys, when you store stuff unlawful on private property, it's liable for costs an' damages.

CHICAGO JOE: You wouldn't want us to break the law, would you? All right, lady, put dat sack down. I guess the niggers'll like your lousy grub.

AUNT FLORA: No—never!

AD LIBS—MINERS: No—no!

CHICAGO JOE: I don't like your act. Take it off. Come on, snappy.

(*Aunt Flora starts to lift the sack. Joe tilts his sub down and sprays the sack with bullets. The meal pours out of a hundred holes. Aunt Flora cries out in pain; she has been shot in the foot. A miner fires, strikes Joe in the shoulder. General firing breaks out, both sides retreating to respective shelters—the pass for the gangsters and the crest boulders for the miners. Martin shields Aunt Flora with his body, pushing her into the laurel; he gets shot in the back, falls. Harry reaches for Martin's gun, gets plugged and falls. The gangsters lose two men; the miners lose four men. The battle is fought from cover, the stage virtually empty except for the dead. The NO TRESPASS sign and the American flag are both shot full of holes. Both sides continue to retreat and soon the firing ceases. A full pause. . . . Then the armed miners reappear on the crest, cautiously move down and cover the pass to allow their women to claim their dead and victuals. One woman starts singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic"; soon they are all singing the hymn.*)

MEN AND WOMEN: (*as they carry their dead and food, going over the crest to exit back stage*)

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the comin of the Lord;
He is tramplin out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He has loosed the fateful lightnin of His terrible swift sword.
His truth is marching on!"

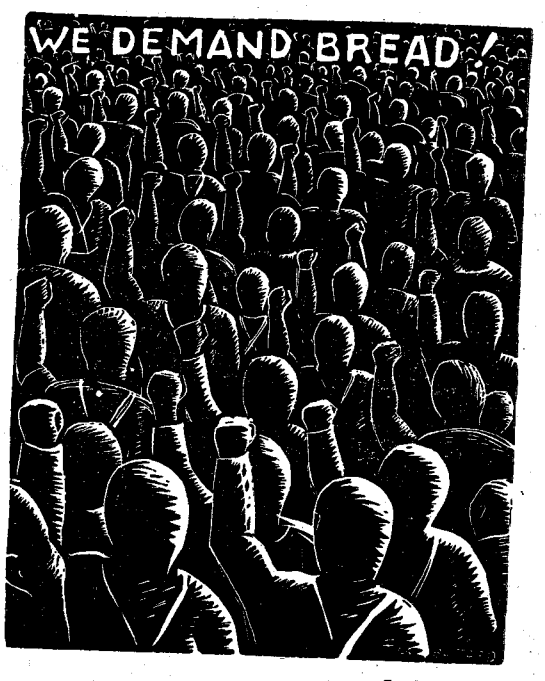
(*Nannie is sitting with Martin's head in her lap—near the grave—quietly weeping.*)

"Glory, glory, hallelujah! Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah! Our God is marchin on!"

(*They are singing off scene now, the mountain ringing with the song. Nannie is alone on the stage with her dead husband's head in her lap, stroking his face. Her head lifts as though she is trying to follow the words of the song and then when the singers cry out the line:—"As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,"—her sobs break out passionately. The singing fades away.*)

NANNIE: (*her face uplifted—speaking slowly*) "As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free."

Curtain



L. Arenal

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Book Supplement

Revolution and the Novel

I. *The Past and Future as Themes*

GRANVILLE HICKS

OF ALL literary types the novel is the hardest to define; any rigid definition excludes a certain number of books that by common consent are known as novels. This situation has driven Mr. E. M. Forster to define a novel as any largely fictitious narrative too long to be called a short story. The flexibility of the novel helps to explain its vogue: it lends itself to many purposes and to all points of view. The most recent of literary forms—an infant when compared with the epic, the lyric, the ballad, the drama—the novel has dominated the literature of the western world for more than a century and a half. Its rise has closely corresponded to the rise of the bourgeoisie, and in the course of its history the mind of the bourgeoisie has been fully expressed, but it cannot be limited to any one class. Not only has the novel been adopted by all the various groups within the bourgeoisie; it has been taken over by proletarian authors, and it is in the novel that the greater and better part of proletarian writing has been done.

Forster's definition explains why the novel can be so naturally and effectively adopted by proletarian writers. Certain traditions have grown up around the drama, traditions with which the proletarian dramatist has to break. Each of the various types of lyric has a history that weighs more or less heavily upon the proletarian poet. But the only tradition of the novel is the tradition of flexibility, of almost complete freedom. The only reason for warning proletarian writers against bourgeois literary forms is that certain of those forms cannot be transferred without a transference of the intellectual and emotional conditions that created them. But the novel is not a form at all in that sense; the term is merely a convenient way of describing a great variety of literary forms that have in common only the two qualities Forster notes.

We do not know what kind of literature a classless society will bring forth, but apparently the novel is to have a prominent part in the literature of the transition period. It is therefore important for proletarian writers and readers, and for Marxist critics, to understand the novel's potentialities. Our youthful proletarian fiction has thus far exhibited a striking lack of variety, which possibly indicates a lack of resourcefulness. Not only have important themes been neglected; the best methods have not always been found for the themes that have been used. In these articles I shall try to point out the manifold possibilities of the novel by commenting concretely on both methods and themes. I shall draw as far as seems advisable on the past history of the novel, but I shall treat the past only in so far as it illuminates the opportunities of contemporary proletarian authors.

An obvious, but none the less useful, classification of novels is based upon time. A novel may be located in the past, in the present, or in the future. (By the present I mean, roughly, the lifetime of the particular author.) Most authors have written of the present—of their particular present, that is—and I shall devote myself chiefly to the possibilities of dealing with the present. But we should not forget that the novelist has both the past and the future to write about if he chooses.

The two essential qualities in a novel of the past are authenticity and relevance. Authenticity we may define for the moment as correspondence to both the known facts about the period in question and the best possible interpretation of those facts. Relevance is relevance to the fundamental interests of the author and his readers.

Novels of the past are most commonly what we call historical romances, and the name indicates that authenticity is not the principal aim of their authors. The greater number of writers who have located their novels in the past have done so because they were thus freed from certain of the responsibilities of dealing with the present. Even the least critical reader, the one who is most eager to yield to illusions, cannot prevent himself from making some sort of comparison between a novel of the present and the reality he knows. Of course he goes through the same sort of process with an historical novel, but so much cannot be compared that he finds it relatively easy to forego criticism even when there is a legitimate place for comparison. The author is thereby privileged to create characters and events in accordance with his own desires or his conception of his readers' desires, and the only checks upon his performance are his readers' knowledge, usually meager, of history and their sense, often not very sharp, of what constitutes consistency and plausibility in human conduct. The author's deviation from authenticity may be the result of ignorance or it may be conscious. It permits both the romanticism of Dumas and Stevenson, a romanticism of adventure and action, and the sentimental, nostalgic romanticism of Willa Cather's *Shadows on the Rock* and Wilder's *The Woman of Andros.*

The absence of authenticity would be enough to condemn historical romances, but in many of them we note the absence of relevance as well. In a sense any book that is read must have some reason for its appeal, but this need not be relevance to the fundamental interests of the reader. The typical historical romance appeals to the reader's desire to escape from the world in which he lives and to experience vicariously a more ideal life, a life unhampered by the restraining conditions of that world. To provide such an opportunity for escape is, according to Stevenson, the primary purpose of fiction, and he, as well as countless others, put his theory in practice. One does not need to engage in any profound psychological demonstration of the harmfulness of such literature; the infantile character of the satisfactions it offers is apparent; indeed, Stevenson frankly said that the function of literature was the function of day-dreams.

But historical romances may have relevance even when they lack authenticity, and, as a matter of fact, the leading historical romancers have sacrificed authenticity for the sake of relevance. Even when the author is permitting his readers to escape from the confines of contemporary reality, he may be seeking as well to impress upon them his own conception of that reality. So Sir Walter Scott, in his novels of the Middle Ages, gave his readers plenty of adventure, but took care at the same time to communicate to them the world-view of a Tory. Willa Cather, in *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and *Shadows on the Rock,* has a message for the modern

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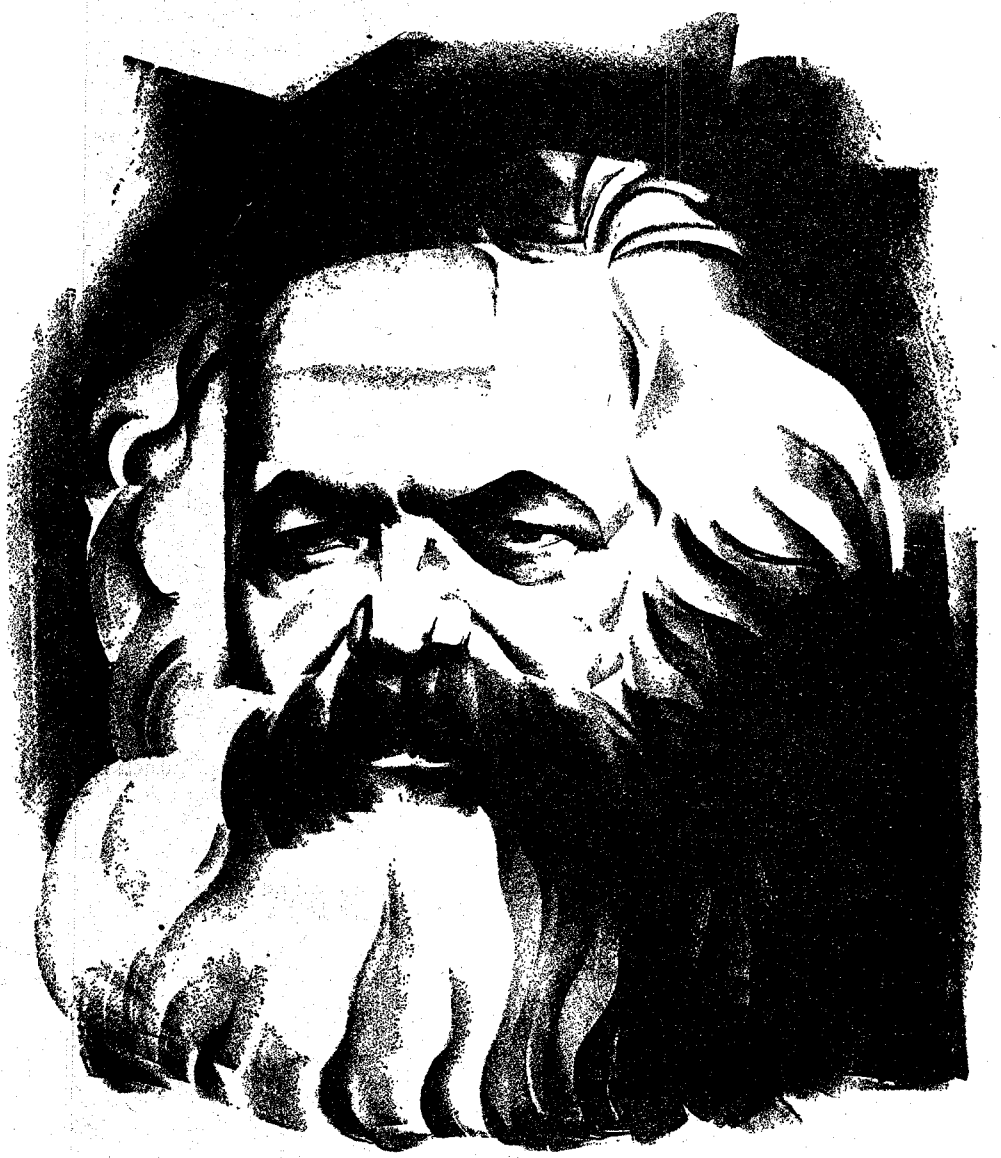

From *Karl Marx' "Capital" in Lithographs*, by Hugo Gellert

world. Hervey Allen has admitted that he chose the period he did for *Anthony Adverse* because he saw in it a parallel to his own age. Miss Cather, Mr. Allen, Mr. Wilder, and a good many others have written of the past precisely because the lower level of authenticity—the result of the impossibility of the reader's making a direct comparison with reality—has permitted them to give to their conceptions of life an apparent relevance that they really do not have. They believe, for example, that religious faith is necessary in the modern world, but they find it easier to demonstrate that necessity in terms of the past.

It is also possible for an historical novel to have a high degree of authenticity with a low degree of relevance. Perhaps complete authenticity would necessarily involve relevance, but in practice, as Leonard Ehrlich's *God's Angry Man* shows, a novelist with wide knowledge of and considerable insight into a period may nevertheless fail to bring out its relevance for our times. Somewhat the same criticism may, at this point, be leveled against Josephine Herbst's *Pity Is Not Enough,* though perhaps subsequent volumes in the series will indicate that this flaw results from some defect in the author's treatment rather than from a fundamental weakness in her conception of the past. In general, authenticity without relevance is the mark of a serious novelist who has not quite found himself.

Enough has been said to indicate the importance of both authenticity and relevance. Authenticity, for the proletarian novelist, means correspondence to the best documentary evidence about the period in question as interpreted according to the Marxian theory of history. Relevance is relevance to the contemporary situation, interests, and demands of the working class. The historical novel further requires, of course, various qualities that are also demanded by the novel of the present, in connection with which I shall discuss them. But, these qualities being present, authenticity and relevance must be added to them.

There is obviously no reason why the proletarian author should not, on these terms, attempt the historical novel. Theoretically the entire past is open to him; there is no period of the past that is not, if one sees deeply enough, relevant to the present interests of the working class. In practice, however, the proletarian author will probably select some event the relevance of which is fairly clear: the French Revolution, Shay's Rebellion, the Paris Commune, the Chartist revolt, for example. Such events offer a magnificent opportunity for increasing the understanding of the present by increasing the understanding of the past. It is true that the proletarian author will probably find it easier to deal with the present, and will be far more interested in the present, but the past is open to him, and, as proletarian literature becomes richer and more diverse, it is safe to predict that the past will not be neglected.

The problem of documenting the historical novel differs little from the problem, which I shall discuss later, of documenting the novel of the present. Authenticity is not secured by the introduction of masses of material gleaned from the history books, nor does it depend on the inclusion of real persons and events. Every character and every incident in a book might be fictitious, and yet the book could have absolute authenticity. Authenticity depends, obviously, on knowledge and understanding, and, if these are great enough, the essential character of the period can be re-created wholly in the realm of fiction. On the other hand, the introduction of historical figures is always permissible and usually advisable.

One reason for urging proletarian novelists to attempt the historical novel is the great advantage they have over their bourgeois contemporaries. It seems almost impossible for the representative middle-class novelist to write about the past without romanticizing it; his vague discontent with the present and his lack of hope for the future almost force him to assume an elegiac tone, even when he is making the greatest effort to be honest. A proletarian author, however, expresses his dissatisfaction with the past in constructive labors for the future, and he would therefore feel little temptation to become nostalgic. The achievement of relevance could scarcely be a serious problem for him, since he would be fully aware of the significant tendencies of his own day. Moreover, the clarifying force of Marxian analysis would lay a firm foundation for the understanding of the past. This is not to say that the writing of a sound and valuable historical novel is easy, even for a proletarian novelist with all his advantages. These advantages entail high standards, and the proletarian writer would be intensely conscious of shortcomings. The difficulties are real, but the opportunities are not to be overlooked. The construction of an artificial parallelism, such as one finds in Upton Sinclair's *Roman Holiday,* is not worth the efforts of a serious writer; such work is as misleading as propaganda as it is defective as literature. But the actual and authentic recreation of some past period—particularly a period in which the class struggle is sharp and its implications for the proletariat significant—offers opportunities for the artist that will compensate for the difficulties it involves.

If novels of the past have much to offer, novels of the future are less promising. We find a few novels located in the future, just as we find many novels located in the past,

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merely for the convenience of the author. We also find a few novels that are concerned with the future merely for the fun of prediction. These usually make some pretence to scientific authority, and they combine romantic entertainment with more or less serious efforts at instruction. The romances of Jules Verne and some of the earlier novels of H. G. Wells are the best examples of the type. Ordinarily, however, any novel that seeks seriously to predict the future does so in order to influence the present. Thus we come to the largest and most important group of novels of the future, the Utopian novels. We may legitimately consider all Utopian novels as novels of the future, even though some of them are located in some imaginary land in the present.

From the earliest times Utopian novels have been written because their authors thought to popularize their views by sugar-coating the bitter pill of exposition. The Utopian novel is always more or less expository, and has to be. Therefore it cannot be judged by the criteria we would apply to other types of fiction. The fundamental criteria must be sociological; it is the soundness of the author's views that counts. On the other hand, we may recognize the presence of literary values, though they are of secondary importance. The Utopian novelist does not merely expound his conception of the future; he tries to show the future itself in human terms. Morris does not content himself with saying that the men of the future will be happy and free and artistic; he tries to show their happiness and freedom and their pursuit of beauty. Huxley does more than condemn the dangers of a mechanized, standardized society; he exhibits the minds and hearts of the people of which such a society is composed. The more fully an author can reveal the human inhabitants of his Utopia, the more convincing he will be. And yet his work must ultimately be judged by the views on which it rests. At best all his art can do is to permit him to apply his knowledge of what human beings are like under the existing conditions to his conception of what future conditions will be, and if he misunderstands the tendencies in the present that are shaping the future, his work fails at both points.

The Utopian novel has been used for a multitude of purposes. Occasionally the author paints the kind of future he hopes will be avoided, as Huxley did in *Brave New World.* Jack London, in *The Iron Heel,* though assuming that the revolutionary movement would eventually succeed, portrayed an initial defeat and its consequences. More commonly the author permits his own interests and desires to shape his conception of the world of the future. After the appearance and success of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward,* several score of American writers embodied in narratives of the future their conceptions of the kind of world they desired and the ways in which such a world could be achieved. Some authors are principally concerned with ends, as both Bellamy and Morris were, in their different ways, in *Looking Backward* and *News from Nowhere,* and describe briefly or not at all the steps by which the better society is to be obtained. Others seek, as Wells has done in his *Shape of Coming Things* to describe the whole process of transformation.

It would appear that the Communist author would be in a position to write with particular effectiveness of the future, and this is probably true. The question, however, is whether it is worth doing. The general conception of the future he would express would be, of course, the property of all Communists, and his work could not have the "originality" of the famous Utopian novelists. So far as the structure of the future society is concerned, the pioneering work has been done, and all the writer could do would be to embody the conceptions of Marx and his followers in as richly human terms as possible. This might have value, in so far as it could bring home the desirability of the classless society and the necessity of the proletarian dictatorship as a means to that end. But there would always be the danger of fanciful and unscientific Utopianism, of the sort that Marxism has always condemned. Communism is rightly opposed to the kind of speculation that interferes with the realistic perception of objective facts, and it may be that a Communist Utopia is a contradiction in terms. Some Communist writer may some day prove me wrong, but I believe, especially when I think of all the other opportunities there are, that the novel of the future is not worth the efforts of a proletarian author.

Joyce and Irish Literature

D. S. MIRSKY

JAMES JOYCE and Marcel Proust are the leading representatives of the literature of the decadent bourgeois culture of the West. But of Proust, the Parisian, the portrayer of the upper layers of this society, one might say if he did not exist the Marxian critic would have to invent him. Joyce is not so pure an example of this type. He has, in addition, certain special characteristics, due to the fact that he was born in a colonial country. If a writer is to be classified by his characters, their locale, their period, then we should have to say that Joyce is the literary representative of the Irish petty bourgeoisie as opposed to that middle bourgeoisie which come into power in the new-born "Irish Free State," after the partial success of the Irish revolution—through betrayal of this revolution and compromise with British Imperialism. But an artist is not classified merely by the material he uses. No less important is his attitude towards his material and the way he uses it. In his relation to his material Joyce is an apostate-emigrant. He has run away from the reality which produced his material. In his creative method he is connected with both the ultra-psychologisers, Henry James and Marcel Proust, and the modernist painters from Cézanne to Picasso.

Joyce was born in Ireland in 1882, in an educated petty bourgeois family. His youth falls in the late 80's and early 1900's—when the Irish revolutionary movement was declining and Irish literature in English was flourishing.

Irish literature in Irish died with the destruction of Irish feudal-tribal society, when the upper class of Ireland began to unite with English colonizers. During the first half of the 19th century the mass of the Irish people began to speak English instead of Irish, due especially to the influence of the Irish Catholic Church, which wanted to use Ireland as a base for the conversion of England to Catholicism. Only in the extreme west of Ireland was there preserved an island of the Irish language.

In the beginning of the Eighteenth century Ireland had produced a number of outstanding writers using the English language. But these writers reflected the landlord class and the old privileged bourgeoisie of the cities, classes English by origin or completely Anglicized. During the whole nineteenth century there was arising in Ireland a new Irish bourgeoisie, plebian-peasant in origin. But up to the 1870's this growth was forcibly checked by the domination of England. All the best powers of the rising Irish intelligentsia in these years went into the national revolutionary movement; and not only into the Irish movement—Ireland gave England two important Chartist leaders, O'Connor and O'Brien, and one of the most important pre-scientific socialists, William Thompson. Irish literature of these years was either of the landlord class (and consequently not Irish but English) or revolutionary. But Irish revolutionary poetry was only an intermittent accompaniment of the revolutionary movement and did not result in the creation of a national literature as a true expression of Irish culture.

In the 1880's the situation changed. Under the pressure of the revolutionary movement of the Irish peasants, English liberal capital-

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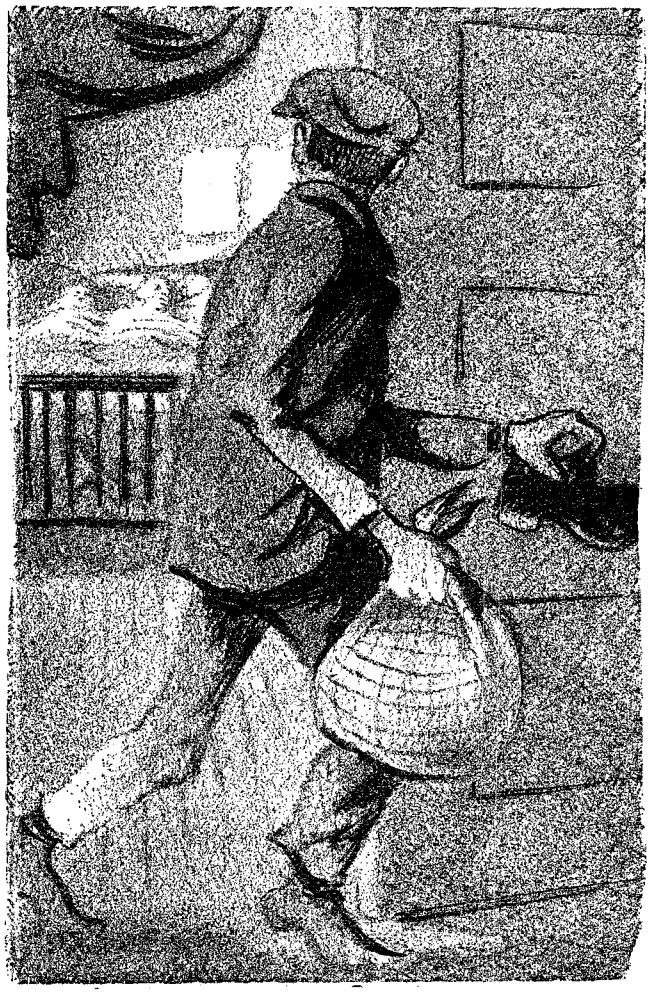

From *It Happens Every Day*, by Phil Bard

ism, as represented by Gladstone, decided to sacrifice to some extent the interests of the Anglo-Irish landlord class.

The agrarian reform made Ireland comparatively prosperous and stimulated the rise of a national bourgeoisie. This checked for about thirty years the growth of the national peasant revolution and encouraged the growth of a new national intelligentsia and with it a national bourgeois literature in English. But the relation of the Irish intelligentsia to its bourgeoisie was unique. Kept down in its development by the domination of England, Ireland did not have its own industrial bourgeoisie. The few large-scale industries were in the hands of the English. The national bourgeoisie was agrarian and merchant. Like every landlord-merchant bourgeoisie it contained all the negative qualities of the bourgeoisie without any of the progressive characteristics of industrial capitalism. Like every landlord-merchant bourgeoisie it was uncultured and ideologically reactionary, maintaining a close bond with the Catholic church and not creating any demand for cultural creative work.

Under these conditions the Irish intelligentsia could have no base, and, like the Russian intelligentsia of the 60's and 70's, had to be "expatriated." It might be said of the Irish as Nekrasov said of the Russians: "You are pariahs in your own country." But there was a difference. The Russian intelligentsia of that period reflected a rising revolutionary situation, although not as yet rooted in the revolutionary class of that time, the peasant class. The Irish intelligentsia flourished during a revolutionary decline—when the situation in Ireland was somewhat like that of Russia after 1905 during the Stolypin period—and consequently the Irish literature, like the Russian literature of the inter-revolutionary period, was anti-social, passively aesthetic, and individualistic. But, unlike the Russian literature after 1905, which was sympathetic to the rising industrial bourgeoisie, the Irish "literary renaissance" was hostile to its bourgeoisie, because this bourgeoisie did not have any need for a literature.

In 1900, as soon as there was a possibility of a revolutionary upsurge, the younger generation of the intelligentsia immediately identified itself with the revolution. The best young poets were shot when the Dublin uprising was put down in the spring of 1916. But for the generation emerging between 1885 and 1910 there was no revolutionary outlet. Their position was tragi-comic: objectively reflecting a class naturally uncultured, they had to serve a master which had no need of their services.

The writers of the so-called "Irish Renaissance" either were of the romantic type, occupied with the mythological past of Ireland, completely divorced from life and politics, with a tendency towards mysticism, occultism, and theosophy—like the greatest poets of this period, Yeats and George Russell (A. E.)—or they had a narrow philological tendency, like Douglas Hyde and his school.

The biography of almost every Irish writer of this generation is marked by sharp conflicts with the Irish public. An outstanding example of this is the reception given Yeats' first play, *The Countess Kathleen*. The heroine of this romantic and very soulful play, which is ideologically thoroughly reactionary, sells her soul to the devil to save her subjects from starvation. This seemed blasphemous to the Catholic philistines and the play was hissed and driven off the stage. (Twenty-five years later, when the Irish bourgeoisie came into power, it set up a censorship to enforce this point of view.) It is significant that this episode is referred to by Joyce in his *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as one of the determining factors in alienating the hero from contemporary Irish life.

Along with this dreamy nationalism we have a special kind of cosmopolitanism, a desertion of Ireland for the continent and England, an effort to escape from their provincial hole, to get away from their landlord-merchant bourgeoisie and join the general Western culture of the cosmopolitan bourgeoisie. The most notable of these deserters was Joyce. His predecessor was John M. Synge.

Synge emigrated early, easily freeing himself from everything Irish. He became Parisian and Bohemian. But he could not find an expression for his artistic energy until Yeats, the patriarch and guardian of this whole generation, advised him to return to Ireland. Following the advice of Yeats, Synge, with his acquired freedom from provincial Ireland, could approach the Irish material as something purely exotic. He took as his theme rural life in the most backward villages of Western Ireland and created a distinctively original drama. The characters speak a conventionalized Anglo-Irish peasant dialect (English with Celtic syntax). The action is governed by a conventionalized interpretation of bucolic backwardness, treated as an exotic grotesque. Thus Synge creates a logical, consistent system of dramatic motives, on the basis of which he builds his dramas.

The relation of Synge to his language is also rooted in this same arbitrary approach to his material. This is emphasized by the specific relation of a cosmopolitan Irishman to the English language. Irish by birth, "Parisian" by culture, Synge had to write in a language with which he had no cultural ties. Keenly aware of this humiliating necessity, feeling, as Joyce so clearly expressed it later, that the lowest, most vulgar English woman was more at home in her language than he, the great and subtle Irish writer, Synge mauled and mutilated the language that history had forced upon him, to make it his own, Irish, Syngian. By emphasizing everything in the speech of the Irish peasant most antipathetic to the "spirit" of the English language, and reducing all this to a logical and harmonious system, he created his own literary dialect—a dialect never spoken by anyone in real life.

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Furthermore, he used this dialect not only where it was justified by the theme, that is, in plays about Irish peasants, but also in his extremely curious translations of Petrarch and Villon.

This was the situation of the Irish intelligentsia and of Irish literature when Joyce, after studying in a Jesuit seminary and the University of Dublin, unable to endure the musty provincialism of the bourgeoisie of Ireland, fled to the continent. In contrast to Synge, who had come back from Ireland from Paris as a returning emigrant, who had completely forgotten his kinship and was able to appreciate the most exotic and aesthetic side of his native land, Joyce left never to return, but also never to forget. He left, hurt by the hated but unforgettable philistinism of Ireland, which he could conquer only when he had become the greatest master of words of the cosmopolitan bourgeois West.

At first it might have seemed that he was ill-fitted to win such a victory. A poverty-stricken intellectual, he wandered over Europe for a long time, earning a bare existence by giving English lessons. At first he was strongly influenced by the Irish Renaissance, as his book of poems, *Chamber Music,* shows. But in *Dubliners* he has already begun to free himself from this inheritance. *Dubliners* is a book of stories of the most prosaic life of the Irish capital, by its very subject sharply veering away from the mythological romanticism of the poets of the "renaissance." Here Joyce belongs to the school of the leading cosmopolitan writers—Flaubert, Maupassant, and the Anglo-Irish Flaubertian, George Moore.

Joyce was at this time working on an autobiographical novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* in which he settles his accounts with his Irish education. This novel is the umbilical cord connecting the naïve provincial student with the world aesthete who beats the French at their own game. The style, strangely enough, is that of the renaissance. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is more Irish, more youthful, more romantic than *Dubliners.* Whereas in *Dubliners* Joyce used a foreign medium, in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* he again reverted to his Irish roots and got rid of them once and for all. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is the logical forerunner of *Ulysses.*

Against the general romantic background of the *Portrait* one incident stands out sharply —the sermon of the Jesuit priest about everlasting torments. In this incident Joyce rises to his full height as a master-craftsman. As a realistic description of the everlasting torments of hell it cannot be surpassed. This sermon is both a great achievement of literary art and a remarkable document on Catholicism. Furthermore, it clearly reveals the nature of that romantic, aesthetic, comtemplative naturalism, the naturalism not of Zola but of Flaubert and Maupassant, to whose school Joyce definitely belongs in *Ulysses.* The social naturalism of Zola is the artistic expression of the liberal bourgeoisie; Joyce's naturalism, with its morbid, confused emotionalism, its delight in the hideous, in pain and death, its pleasure in suffering and its satisfaction in defeat and humiliation, expresses the biological defeat of the historically doomed. In Flaubert there is, further, an expression of an individual defeat, the individual struggle for existence of a refined and sensitive being, unable to endure the pressure of capitalist competition, an artist living in an age "hostile to art and poetry." In Joyce a similar tendency has its origin in the "Flaubertian" soil of a provincial, uncultured, merchant-landlord Ireland. But in his period of maturity this changes to a perfect expression of the biological defeat of an idle, culturally refined, imperialistic bourgeoisie. Thus traits which originate in the rebellion of the petty bourgeois intellectual against an uncultured bourgeoisie become, in another historical setting, traits common to the international capitalistic culture of this period.

This transfer of Joyce from his Irish to the European milieu is interestingly illustrated by his personal relationships. Leaving Ireland he wandered for a long time over Europe and finally settle down for a time in Trieste. There he made friends with Smitz, a millionaire and a director of one of the two largest steamship lines of Trieste. He discovered that Smitz was a "great writer" and persuaded him to take up literature seriously. The ultra-psychological novels of Smitz, written under the pseudonym of Italo-Svevo (Italo-Austrian) were highly appreciated (especially outside of Italy; the fascisti despise this "effeminate" refinement) and won him the reputation of "the Italian Proust."

When *Ulysses* appeared, one of the first to appreciate it was Valery Larbaud, another millionaire writer, part owner of Vichy, and author of the well-known novel, *A. O. Barnaabooth.* Larbaud became one of Joyce's staunchest supporters, and the excellent French translation of *Ulysses* was published by him. Smitz, "discovered" by Joyce, and Larbaud, the "discoverer" of Joyce, two super-refined millionaire aesthetes, sponsored his debut into the literature of the international bourgeoisie. By this time Joyce had already settled in Paris. The war found him at Trieste, whence he fled to Zurich and later to Paris. All this time he was working on *Ulysses,* which, finished in 1921, was published in 1922.

It is unnecessary at this time to discuss the "story" of *Ulysses.* The style, however, deserves comment. *Ulysses* is written in several different keys, to take a figure from music. These "keys" give the story, as it were, a new dimension, a new coefficient. One chapter differs from another not only in content but also in style. And this style is subtly connected with the content.

In the matter of coining new words and deforming old ones, and in the variety and virtuosity of his style, Joyce has no equal. Most of the famous deformers of words have changed them with a certain consistency, in keeping with the author's general aim. Milton, for example, created his artificial Latinized vocabulary as a part of the new bourgeois ideology growing out of the struggle between the renaissance and the revolution. And Mayakovsky wrote revolutionary poems in a language entirely divorced from classicism. Even Gogol and Shakespeare, in their word deforming, had but two or three "registers," closely related to each other, which they used over and over. But Joyce did not want merely to create one consistent style; he wanted to master words and subdue them to himself, to make them do whatever he wanted them to do. This is, at bottom, an expression of the style of the dying bourgeoisie, who wanted to change reality into forms of their own choice, and substitute for actuality this world of forms created by themselves. Synge was in the same situation, but, returning from Paris to Ireland, he was content with creating his own Syngian dialect, claiming for it equal rights with any other literary form of the English language. Joyce, who had entered the European arena, sought something more, and created a language which should include all the forms of the English language, absorb them in itself as the sea absorbs the rivers which flow into it.

We should also observe the ending of *Ulysses.* Like *War and Peace* Joyce's novel ends with a woman as the incarnation of the eternal, unchanging, elemental life of the flesh. For Tolstoy the triumph of the female Natasha is the triumph of the soil, of the fundamental, real life of the country over the artificial, superimposed intellectuality and sophistication of the city, symbolizing the fact that elemental animal forces are on the side of the class he thought destined by history to be victorious. For Joyce the triumph of the female, Marion Bloom, is the triumph of mysterious forces, of that which will remain living when men, the lovers of decay and death, have been completely swept away by history. It might seem that the book ends on a note of reconciliation as Marion at the end is swept by a flood of poetic thoughts. But this lyricism is not a reconciliation of the author with her but her own complacence in the triumph of the female, satisfied if she gets her male—"one as good as another." For Joyce this ending expresses the triumph of middle-class Ireland, which has no need for Bloom with his timid desires and hankering for culture and offers Stephen only the bed of a dissipated bourgeois philistine. On the European stage the ending of *Ulysses* signifies the triumph of the vital bourgeoisie over the decadence represented by Stephen and Joyce. It is quite obvious that under other historical conditions the point of view of such people as Joyce would not have had a wide appeal.

Ulysses is the end of Joyce's artistic expression; the triumph of Marion is his final word. Since *Ulysses* Joyce has been writing ten years. Selections of his work have been published under the title of *Work in Progress* and a number of short pieces have appeared—

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Anna Livia Plurabelle, Haveth Chiders Everywhere. This is pure nonsense, the work of a master of language writing nothing. The theme is again Ireland, but a completely unreal Ireland—a mixture of nonsensically-stylized conversations of ordinary Dubliners, with mythological frills. Russian futurism went through this period of nonsense in its earliest stages. It was a revolt against traditional literary forms of expression, a school of abstract sound technique as a preparatory exercise for the creation of a new poetry, full of meaning, and the best of it working for the revolution. In Joyce this nonsense comes at the end of a brilliant but aimless career. In *Ulysses* Joyce exhausted his material. He subdued the English language to his will. He created the monumental super-Babbitt, Bloom. And at the zenith of his victory he voluntarily surrendered his vantage points to the vulgar female—Marion. There was nothing more to do. All he had left was naked virtuosity and he carried it further and further, smearing up language and sense into a kind of formless, meaningless mass.

We may ask ourselves whether Joyce offers a model for revolutionary writers. The answer is that his method is too inseparably connected with the specifically decadent phase of the bourgeois culture he reflects, is too narrowly confined within its limits. The use of the inner monologue (stream of consciousness method) is too closely connected with the ultra-subjectivism of the parasitic, rentier bourgeoisie, and entirely unadaptable to the art of one who is building socialist society. Not less foreign to the dynamics of our culture is the fundamentally static method in which the picture of Bloom is composed, and around him the whole novel. The novel is collossal, grandiose—there is no denying it—and in our time, when the slogan is "Build a Magnitostroy of Art," it may be tempting to imitate its huge contours. But Magnitostroy is not merely a gigantic thing; it is also growth, work, aim—a part of the revolution. *Ulysses* is static. It is more like Cheops than Magnitostroy.

In the matter of word creation unquestionably Joyce surpasses anything that has been done in Russian literature. But though the vocabularies of Biely and the futurists had their roots in quite other soil from that of Joyce, this stage has long been passed by Soviet art, along with all kinds of formalism connected with conditions incident to the decline of the bourgeoisie, which with us is already left far behind.

There remains still the most fundamental element of Joyce's art, his realistic grasp, his amazing exactness of expression, all that side in which he is of the school of the French naturalists, raising to its ultimate height their cult of the *mot juste.* It is this exactness which gives Joyce the wonderful realistic power in depicting the outer world for which he is famous. But this has its roots on the one hand in a morbid, defeatist delight in the ugly and repulsive and, on the other, in an aesthetico-proprietary desire for the possession of "things." So that even this one realistic element of Joyce's style is fundamentally foreign to the realism towards which Soviet art aims, namely a mastery of the world by means of active, dynamic materialism—with the purpose of not merely understanding but also changing the reality of history.

—Translated by David Kinkead.

The Quarter's Books in Review

Upsurge, by Robert Gessner. Farrar and Rinehart. $1. A loud, passionate poem of revolt, weak in its parts, but as a whole rather stirring.

Passions Spin the Plot, by Vardis Fisher. Doubleday, Doran and Co. $2.50. Mr. Fisher tells, sincerely but awkwardly, his own story in this, the second volume of his proposed tetralogy.

The Disinherited, by Jack Conroy. Covici-Friede. $2. One of the finest books the revolutionary movement has produced.

Labor and Steel, by Horace Davis. International Publishers. $2. An authoritative factual study of the greatest value.

Reminiscences of Lenin, by Clara Zetkin. International Publishers. $.20. Valuable for its record of Lenin's words as well as for its revelation of both Lenin and Zetkin.

From the First to the Second Five Year Plan, by Stalin, Molotov, and Others. International Publishers. $1.50. A collection of brilliant speeches showing how dialectical materialism is put into practice in the Soviet Union.

From Broadway to Moscow, by Marjorie E. Smith. Macaulay. $2. A New York journalist tells, honestly and interestingly, what she saw in Russia.

Art Young's Inferno. Delphic Studios. $5. The veteran artist of the revolution sums up, in pictures, his views of capitalism. Mike Gold liked it and so will you.

Woman in Soviet Russia, by Fanina Halle. Viking. $4.50. Ella Winter, who ought to know, thinks this is one of the better books on Russia.

S. S. Utah, by Mike Pell. International Publishers. $1.25. A real story of real sailors and what they learned in the Soviet Union.

The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan, by James T. Farrell. Vanguard. $2.50. Farrell continues his clinical study, authentic and overwhelming, of the making of a gangster.

The Native's Return, by Louis Adamic. Harper. $2.75. A first-rate reporter takes a look, thanks to Mr. Guggenheim, at his fatherland and sees red.

Just Plain Larnin', by James M. Shields. Coward-McCann. $2. A novel that tells a good deal of what every teacher knows, but contains some romantic notions about reform.

Parched Earth, by Arnold B. Armstrong. Macmillan. $2.50. The literary editor, undaunted by the Times and the Herald-Tribune, insists that this is a good novel.

My Russian Neighbors, by Alexander Wicksteed. Whittlesey House. $1.75. An Englishman's unpretentious record of ten years in the Soviet Union.

Karl Marx' "Capital" in Lithographs, by Hugo Gellert. Long and Smith. $3. A rich and interesting book, carrying out a task never before attempted by a revolutionary artist.

Belly Fulla Straw, by David Cornel de Jong. Knopf. $2.50. Limited but skillful analysis of a Dutch immigrant.

Murder—Made in Germany, by Heinz Liepmann. Harper. $2.50. A novel based on first-hand experiences in Nazi Germany, by an author now imprisoned in Holland.

On the Shore, by Albert Halper. Viking. $2. Sketches of the author's boyhood in Chicago, many of them excellent.

Children of Ruth, by Marvin Sutton. Greenberg. $2.50. Slightly myopic but interesting novel of English rural life.

MOTORMAN

I get to thinking every time this street car
stops on the red light:
I wish I was in Russia where a guy who
can run a motor can always get a
job and work steady as long as he
wants.
Here I've been fifteen years on and off on
this crosstown line and still I'm
only temporary.
What'll I do twenty or thirty years from
now when I can't work no more?
Every time I see that red light I think of
Russia and want to go ahead, right
through the traffic.
Some day we'll lay the tracks from here all
around the world to Moscow and
we'll run a car through,
Stopping at all the cities and towns on the
way over and pick up millions and
millions of passengers.

GEORGE SALVATORE.

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Notes on a Review

EARL BROWDER

ONLY a few weeks ago I considered myself unqualified to review such a book as this.* About Art I know little. Then I waited to read what would be written by the qualified reviewers. To date I have read a dozen reviews, ranging from the apoplectic frenzy of denunciation in the Weekly People: through more subtle diatribes of the New York Herald-Tribune, and the Washington Post: the appreciative but apprehensive New York Evening Journal; etc., etc., topping it off with THE NEW MASSES and Daily Worker reviews.

The result of reading these reviews was to cause me to throw caution to the winds and my hat into the ring of "art criticism."

What kind of criticism should be given to Hugo Gellert's book?

First of all what it *demands* from every revolutionist at first glance over its pages is a shout of joyful discovery, to call every intelligent person's attention to the fact that here is a book of first importance that cannot be overlooked.

With chagrin it must be noted that not THE NEW MASSES nor the Daily Worker reviewers saw their duties in that light. Their grudging praise, closely followed by the weasel-words of carping criticism of non-essentials, is all in the grey decorousness of a high-grade correspondence school.

The book itself is a mighty shout of affirmation of the living, growing, human truths of Marxism. The least a review should do is to indicate something of that quality.

It is too bad to have to admit that in the camp of avowed enemies there has been more generous recognition of the amazing achievement of Gellert's drawings than in the revolutionary press. This is a scandalous situation.

Thus Gilbert Seldes writes words that reflect something of the glow of Gellert's drawings when he says: "I find the lithographs superb; harsh or tender, argumentative or prejudiced, or full of action, they are all absorbingly interesting. Sometimes they are inspired in their quick rendering of the subject: a woman and a child tied to cogged wheels illustrate the effects of machinery on human beings. Sometimes the symbolism is powerful: the great closed fist of the proletariat emerges from ingots of gold or breaks thru cams and levers of a vast machine. There are ghastly pictures of capitalism as a swollen moneysack on which a death's head reposes: there are memorable pictures of cruelty and tyranny. Opposite each picture is a page from the text of *Das Kapital*. Made easier reading by Gellert's illustration, these pages are still terrifying in the accuracy with which they foretell so many things which have happened to us."

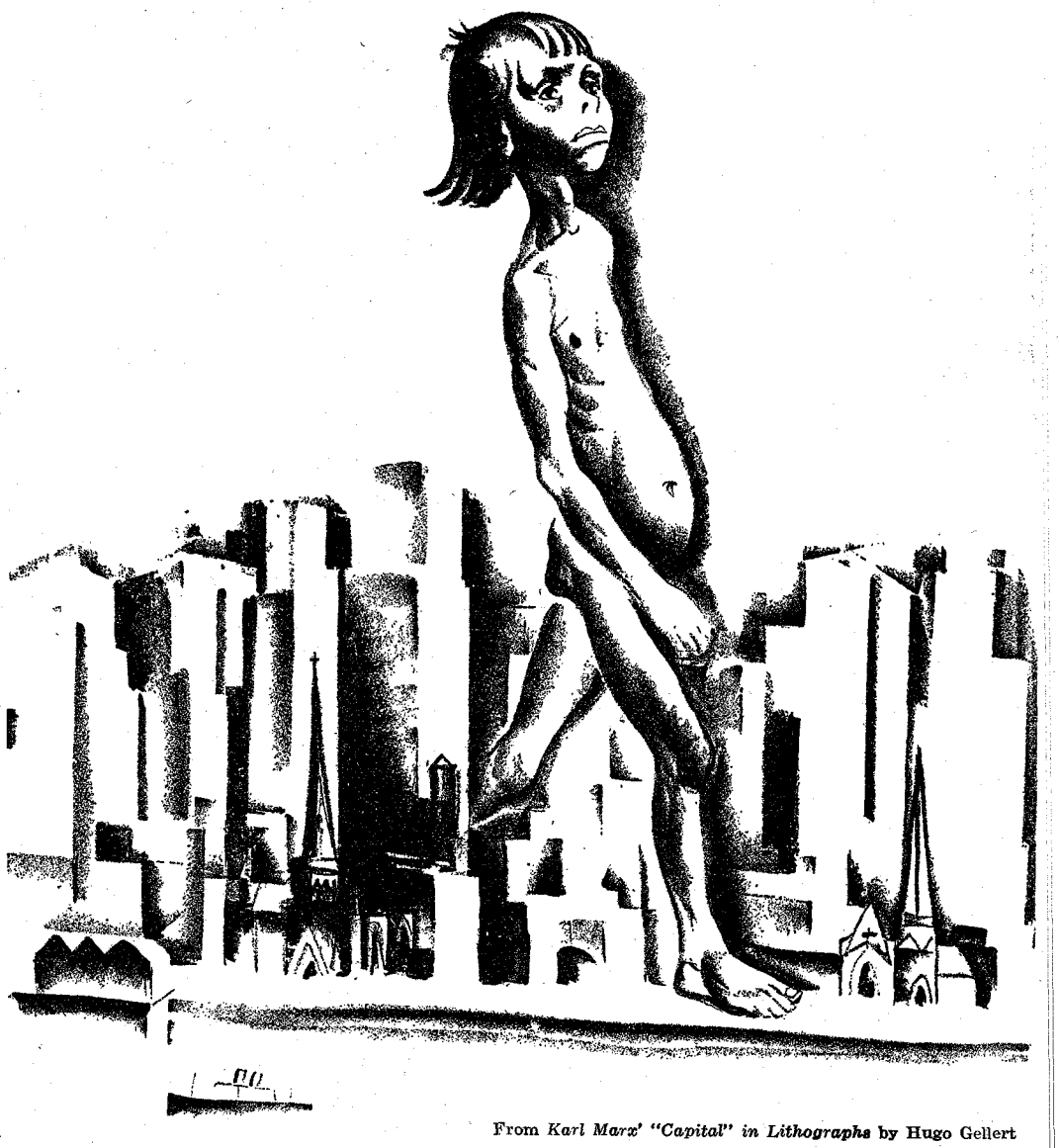
But what does THE NEW MASSES tell us about the same book? The reviewer (O. Frank, unknown to me) after finding merit of a sort in some of the drawings (nothing to get excited about!) proceeds to explain that he finds the workers "muscle-bound," he doesn't like the symbols used, he finds "every illustration in the group just discussed . . . is a fragment, without implications, undialectical." He finds "lifeless symbols," "arbitrary make-up," "too rigid and conventionalized." The whole is topped off with the consolatory remark that "Gellert has given himself a very tough assignment," and a conjecture that he might have done better with *The Communist Manifesto*.

If this is revolutionary reviewing then I am a first-class musician. It filled me with such anger that I forgot all my inhibitions, all niceties of polite writing, and rushed onto paper with these highly personal reactions.

I don't know if Gellert's book is a "masterpiece of art" or not, but I do know it is a smashingly powerful political document. If it is "not good art" then so much the worse for art—and artists.

Finally, if there are still any reviewers who are so sectarian and narrow-minded that their judgment of Gellert's magnificent book has been warped by the knowledge that Gellert is not a Party member, they should finally begin to understand that it is precisely such pettifogging approach to works of great merit that may well be responsible for keeping some artists in the role of "fellow-travelers" instead of Partymen.

Gellert has set himself a great task, the result of which is a brilliant, throbbing, and thrilling translation of some fundamentals of Marxism into the medium of pictures. The portrait of Marx is itself a political document. Every serious Marxist in the world will acknowledge a debt to Hugo Gellert. And more serious reviewers will be writing about it for years to come.



From *Karl Marx' "Capital" in Lithographs* by Hugo Gellert

* *Karl Marx' "Capital" in Lithographs,* by Hugo Gellert. Ray Long and Richard Smith. $3.

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The Many-Sided Epic of the Soviets

JOSHUA KUNITZ

TO THE future student of the early period of Soviet life, the simple, non-fictional, apparently transitory literature now created in the U.S.S.R. will most likely appear as the most characteristic literary expression of the Revolution. The fourteen soft-covered, modest-looking booklets under review, ignored by most critics, present, when read in the proper sequence, a magnificent tale of both the destructive and the creative phases of the Revolution. Some day all these very personal reminiscences and very transitory reports and articles dealing with the immediate problems of the Revolution will be fused by a great writer into an epic commensurate with the greatest upheaval in the history of man. But even now, the imaginative reader can reconstruct for himself some of the grandeur portrayed in these very hastily written books.*

Of the four books dealing with the Civil War, Vsevolod Ivanov's dramatization of his early novel *Armored Train N 14-69* is the earliest and most widely known. It tells of the seizure of an armored train and the occupation of Vladivostok by the Bolsheviks during the bitter struggle in the Far East. The action in the play is not very clearly motivated; the characterizations are rather sketchy, and the interplay of elemental passions, religious loyalties, international aspirations, and class feelings is quite chaotic. Yet, the impact on the reader is colossal. The sense of brutality, suffering, and glory communicated is authentic and unforgettable. In the masterly presentation by the Moscow Art Theater, the play has thrilled Soviet audiences for almost a decade. It has also enjoyed wide popularity outside the U.S.S.R.

The Commissar of the Gold Express, by V. Matveyev, recounts the breath-taking adventures of a Bolshevik workingman who was given the hazardous task of seizing on short notice all the gold, platinum and cash reserves from Ekaterinburg (ten tons in gold and platinum from the gold refinery and half a billion rubles in cash from the banks) and transporting them to Moscow—this at a time when the Czecho-Slovaks and the anti-Bolshevik Government at Samara were in almost complete control of those regions. The manner in which Commissar Rebrov, in charge of the special train despatched by the Ural Soviet, managed, when waylaid by White guerilla detachments only two hours away from Moscow, to escape and dash his treasure-laden express back to the Urals where, under extremely perilous conditions, he hid the gold in an inaccessible cavern, is a model of Bolshevik determination and loyalty. In the course of the story we get glimpses of sabotaging military specialists, of the Czar and his family in their Ekaterinburg home, of Ekaterinburg under the Whites, etc. The booklet is interspersed with a number of interesting documents: the food card issued by the Tobolsk Soviet to the former Czar of all the Russias; a list of the curtains, linens, dishes, and various bric-à-brac which the Czar's family took along when they were exiled to Siberia, including such details as three shovels, one broom, one straw garden basket with handles, three chamber pots; the order to evacuate the gold from Ekaterinburg, signed by the famous Bolshevist Sverdlov; and finally, at the very end of the book, the text of what was at that time used as a pass into Soviet territory in Siberia.

The Ring of Fire, by Ivan Ovcharenko is an exciting account of the struggles of the Red Partisans in Crimea in 1918 and 1919. It is a simple, direct, vigorous narrative of unsurpassed heroism in the face of incredible cruelty.

Especially interesting, however, is I. Strod's story of the *Civil War in the Taiga.* The author, the son of a poor peasant, was born in 1894. At the end of the Imperialist War, he had four Crosses of St. George on his breast. In April, 1918, he joined the First Cavalry Division of the Red Guards in the city of Irkutsk. He fought against the Czechs and against Semenov's army. After several months in a White prison, he escaped and soon found himself leading a detachment of workers and peasants against Kolchak. His jobs in the Red Army were varied and numerous—heading partisan detachments, leading an army against the Japanese, against Baron Ungern, etc. In the Imperialist War, Strod was wounded twice and shell-shocked once. In the Civil War he was wounded five times, the last time in 1923, in his battle against General Pepelyaev, whose counter-revolutionary venture in Yakutia Strod describes in the book.

In 1923, General Pepelyaev, at the head of an army of White Guards, advanced into Siberia with the objective of seizing Yakutsk and of advancing thence to Omsk and as far as the Urals. His dream was to arouse the Siberian population against the Soviet Government and to wrest vast Asiatic territory from the Bolsheviks. Gen. Pepelyaev found support in Yakutia only among the kulaks. The workers and poor peasants rallied around the Communist Party and soon routed the Whites and drove them out of the country.

In this struggle, the Red Army, under the terrible conditions of the Siberian winter, displayed great valor and devotion to the proletarian cause. The most distinguished service was rendered by the small detachment led by Strod, the author of this book. His detachment occupied two peasant huts in the district of Sasil-Sisi, in the midst of the Siberian forests, far from any other habitation, cut off from the original base, without connections either with the center at Yakutsk or with other sections of the Red Army. They had little food and practically no medicaments. Yet they withstood the siege against the main forces of Pepelyaev. By detaining Pepelyaev for nineteen days, Strod enabled the Red Army to rally and deal the enemy a crushing blow. At the end of the book we see Pepelyaev's army decimated and himself caught on the northernmost edge of the Asiatic continent and brought before proletarian justice. Pepelyaev and 26 others were sentenced to death by shooting. However, on petition, the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union commuted all the sentences to ten years' imprisonment from the time of the preliminary incarceration. This extraordinary treatment was probably actuated by Pepelyaev's last words before sentence was imposed on him. "Physical death," said he, "does not frighten me. Spiritual death is harder to bear. I sincerely believed that I was struggling for my native land, for the people, not against them. Now, to my sorrow, I am too late. Through the prison bars I saw and understood that I was cruelly mistaken, that behind our backs and with our blood, others made money, while we were being pushed over the precipice, where I was destroyed. Whatever sentence is passed upon me, I consider it well deserved. If the Soviet Government grants me my life and entrusts arms to me in the future, I give my word that I will defend it just as stubbornly, as, until now, I have struggled against it." To make the story complete, we should mention that during the Sasil-Sisi siege, Strod was severely wounded: a bullet pierced his lungs and was never removed. Because of his ill health, Strod is now demobilized from the Red Army and is a student at the Frunze Military Academy. Under the Soviets he was decorated at four different times with the Order of the Red Banner, the highest award the Soviet Government can offer.

By the time one reads through these four

**Armored Train No. 14-69,* by Vsevolod Ivanov, Cloth $0.75, Paper $0.25; *Commissar of the Gold Express,* by V. Matveyev, Cloth $1.00, Paper $0.50; *In a Ring of Fire,* by Ivan Ovcharenko, 15 cents; *Civil War in the Taiga,* by I. Strod, 25 cents; *From Peasant to Colective Farmer,* by R. Bishop and B. Buchwald, Cloth $0.75, Paper $0.25; *One of 25,000,* by A. Isbach, 10 cents; *Nefte-Chala,* by I. Isbach, 10 cents; *Workaday Heroics,* 20 cents; *On the Steppes of the Ukraine and Caucasus,* by P. Vaillant-Couturier, 15 cents; *Free Soviet Tadjikistan,* by P. Vaillant-Couturier, 10 cents; *The Ferry,* by Mark Egart, 25 cents; *Moscow Old and New,* by T. Kholodny, 15 cents; *Moscow of Tomorrow,* by A. Rodin, 10 cents; *Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow and other Cities,* by L. M. Kaganovich, 15 cents. All issued by International Publishers.

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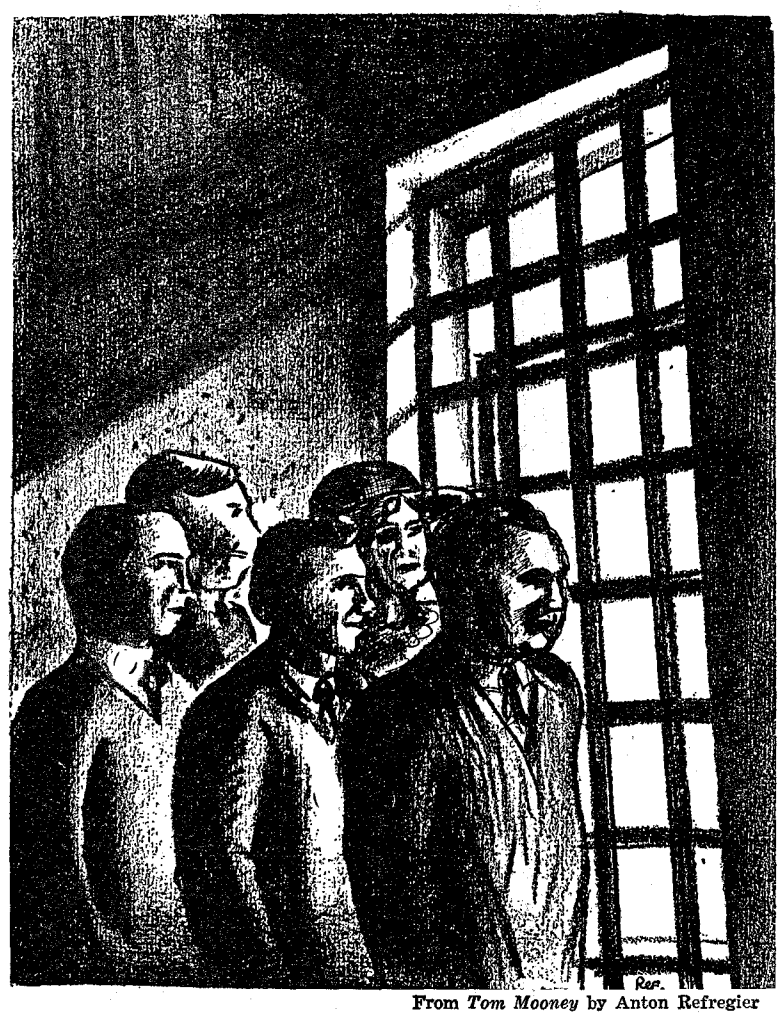
books one realizes the tremendousness of the forces released by the October Revolution. In the struggle for power, the workers and poor peasants of the Soviet Union were pitted against the combined forces of World Imperialism and the well-trained and well-equipped armies of their own landlords and capitalists, and they won. Peasants who had never been in the army fought victorious battles against Czarist generals. Industrial workers, driven by the exigencies of war, became great military leaders. Undisciplined bands of partisans were whipped by the iron will of the Bolsheviks into a formidable, well-organized and disciplined Red Army.

Needless to say, the victorious struggles on the industrial front, the triumphant battles against the kulaks, the stubborn fight for culture, for technique, for a new collectivized life, offer fully as many thrilling examples of adventure, heroism, and self-sacrifice as do the military exploits in the works already discussed. The richest in this respect are the books dealing with collectivization, the transformation of the primitive, illiterate, individualistic peasant into a cultured member of a collective enterprise, the leap from a small individual peasant household, using an antediluvian technique, to a large, collectivized, highly modernized farm and all the emotional adjustments entailed. The subject of collectivization involves the dependence of mechanized agriculture on the rapid development of industry; the role of the city proletariat in directing and organizing collectivization in the country; the specific problems of collectives in various sections of the vast Union; and is deeply complicated by the problems of the numerous backward national minorities along the peripheries.

All this is excellently brought out in seven of the books under review: *From Peasant to Collective Farmer,* by N. Buchwald and R. Bishop, *One of 25,000* and *Nefte-Chala* by A. Isbach, *Workaday Heroics—Life and Work in Soviet Fields* (a collection of sketches), *On the Steppes of the Ukraine and the Caucasus* and *Free Soviet Tadjikistan* by Paul Vaillant-Couturier, *The Ferry* by Mark Egart.

The position of the minority peoples in the Soviet Union is best revealed in the last three booklets. Here we meet the Chechentsy, the Circassians, the Gypsies, the German Menonites, the Mountain Jews, the Kirghizians, the Uzbecks, the Tadjiks, the Tiurks, the Nogaitsi, the Oyrats, etc. Most of these peoples are Mohammedan, most of them had been conquered during the nineteenth century, had been denied the possibility of developing their native cultures, and had been kept under the complete sway of the mosque. These books give the story of an unprecedented rejuvenation of peoples. Following the formula adopted by the Bolsheviks—culture, proletarian in content and national in form—all these peoples, though so utterly different in type and background, are gradually evolving a distinct Soviet culture. Everywhere different yet everywhere the same. Take collectivization. Whereas the essential class forces are identical whether you go to a village in Russia, in the Caucasus or in central Asia, the expression of these forces differs in each locale. In Russia, you would have the problem of the Russian kulak vs. the Russian poor peasant, with the Greek Orthodox priest working hand in hand with the kulak, and the Communist working with the poor peasant, and the middle peasant vacillating between the two extremes, now falling under this or that influence. In Mohammedan Tadjikistan you have precisely the same thing, except that instead of a Bible-quoting Greek orthodox priest you have a mullah who quotes the Koran in support of counter-revolutionary activities. You have the Tadjiks discussing cotton instead of wheat. The Tadjiks speak a different language, wear different costumes, sing different songs, play different instruments. In short, externally they seem to be utterly different from the Russians. Still, if a Russian went to a play on collectivization in the city of Stalinobad, he would understand everything that was going on even if he did not know a word of the Tadjik language. The essential problems are identical. Furthermore, since the class alignments are exactly the same, the methods of organization of a collective farm the same, the methods of compensation the same, the cultures gradually begin to assume greater similarity. Just as all the bourgeois countries of Europe, though so different within themselves, are sufficiently alike to constitute essentially one body of European bourgeois culture, so now there is actually emerging a Soviet culture which, though it retains superficially a variety of national forms, is basically quite unified and distinct.



From *Tom Mooney* by Anton Refregier

The position of woman is another illustration. In central Asia, for instance, she has been for centuries regarded as the property of the male, bought at an early age without her consent, transferred to others without her consent, etc. Furthermore, in central Asia, unlike the other Mohammedan countries, the woman is not allowed to expose any part of her skin to a male stranger. Exposing her bare elbow would be as shocking for her as for an American woman to expose the most intimate parts of her body. She is usually dressed in a long cloak with sleeves tied in the back. In front she wears a very thick horsehair net extending from the top of her head down to her toes. She can see the world but the world cannot see her. When she walks along the street she must neither stop nor cough nor linger—she must just keep on walking. Generally she is accompanied by a male from her immediate family. In the house she lives in a special compartment which no male visitor is allowed to enter. However, rapid industrialization of Asia and collectivization make it quite impossible for the women to lead this isolated kind of life. The lure of the factory, high wages, and medical and other services given there are such that even the most fanatical male cannot for long restrain his daughters or even wives from going to work in the cotton mills and silk factories. Also in the collective farms the woman gets paid as much for a day's work as a

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man, and that draws her out of her seclusion. Altogether, the change in the economic base tends to change all relations, including domestic relations; and insofar as the economic base in Soviet Russia and in Soviet Asia is the same, the domestic relations in the two countries begin to grow similar.

All these changes are the results of much effort and heroic devotion. Even the three books dealing with Moscow's municipal problems—*Moscow Old and New* by T. Kholodny, *Moscow of Tomorrow* by A. Rodin, and *The Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow and Other Cities in the U.S.S.R.* by L. M. Kaganovich—convey the strong sense of Bolshevik Workaway heroics—the type of peacetime heroics which Walter Duranty describes so enthusiastically in the New York Times of March 26. Speaking of the 80,000 volunteers who gave up their free day to help complete the subway on time, Duranty says: "The volunteers received no pay for their day's work, but at all shafts there was immense energy and enthusiasm. That was the result of the 'social rivalry' under which one brigade or group challenges another and bets on the result. It is the Soviet answer to the 'profit motive' as a human incentive." And it is this Soviet answer that one finds eloquently expressed in the twelve sketches collected under the title "Workaday Heroics," and especially in Isbach's *Nefte-Chala* and *One of the 25,000.*

In 1930, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union decided to send 25,000 industrial workers into the villages to help the poor and middle peasants to form collectives. And the second of Isbach's books deals with one of those 25,000, who was elected by the Moskvoretskaya Textile Workers to go to Kirghizia in distant Asia to help the nomads to organize collective farms. The hero of this story is Gregory Indievatkin, a fitter in the Moskvoretskaya factory and a Bolshevik. The entire booklet consists of letters exchanged between the Factory Committee, Indievatkin and the latter's wife during his stay in Central Asia where he was finally killed by the local kulaks. Besides a one-page introductory note, Isbach's sole contribution was the job of collecting these beautiful letters. Written in a purely casual manner, they reveal with complete simplicity and self-abnegation a Bolshevik's devotion to the humble tasks of taking care of a machine and tractor station.

Indievatkin touchingly speaks of the difficulties—of the stupidities of the local Communists, the ignorance of the local Soviet officials, the dangers caused by kulak attacks, and of ceaseless work. He misses his wife and two children, he misses the culture of Moscow, he is hungry most of the time, yet his letter is speckled with such phrases as: "We were sent to build up a new life." "I have been sent here so that the proletariat may live well." "I am not downhearted." "Am paying great attention to educating the masses." "Sowing carried out a hundred percent." However, perhaps the best way of communicating the incandescent Bolshevik spirit of this book would be to quote the letters from and to Indievatkin, which, unfortunately, space does not permit. To paraphrase Michael Lukyanov's excellent preface to the *Workaday Heroics:*

These are books about heroes, but about modest, simple, and inconspicuous heroes. Books mainly written by workers about working days, but about workings days that are magnificent, full of thrilling meaning: about the glad, creative, self-sacrificing and persistent labor of millions of people. These are stories of factories and state and collective farms—stories about the new men, doing a new sort of work in a new land. The crowning merit of these people is this—that every one of them, even though his job be a small one, remembers and feels that his job is a component part of the common socialist cause. Each one feels himself responsible for his job, he is responsible for the whole task of socialist construction, for the success of the great common task. . . . Yesterday they were slaves; today they feel themselves the genuine masters of their lives, the masters of the world; and the world is shaken by their example of struggle and labor; they point out the new way —the way to Communism.

To a Revolutionary Girl

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

Violets peer out in streaks
On the covered ribs
Of hills, and meet the air
In a million trembling
Lips on fields throughout the world:
Stretch along the highways,
Small and mighty in the drip of rain:
Dot the base of mountains,
Equal purpose in disguise:
Signal friendship
To the rocks,
Take the darkness
From cave-outlets
And ravines—

you are a girl,
A revolutionist, a worker
Sworn to give the last, undaunted jerk
Of your body and every atom
Of your mind and heart
To every other worker
In the slow, hard fight
That leads to barricade, to victory
Against the ruling swine.
Yet, in the softer regions of your heart,
The shut-off, personal, illogical
Disturbance of your mind,
You long for crumpled 'kerchiefs, notes
Of nonsense understood
Only by a lover:
Long for colors on your dresses,
Ribboned sleeves, unnecessary buttons:
Bits of laughter chased and never
Dying: challenge of a hat
Buoyant over hair.
Youth and sex, distinctions
Still unmarred by centuries of pain,
Will not be downed, survive
In spite of hunger, strikes, and riot-guns,
Sternness in the ranks.
We frown upon your sensitive demands:
We do not like romance
In our present time—to us
It reeks of flowered screens
Over garbage-cans, of pretty words
Bringing hollowness, not flesh,
To every skeleton.
It stamps the living death of Hollywood,
The tactics of a factory
Shipped in boxes round, price-marked
With lying sweetness, trivial
Melodrama doping eyes and ears.
And yet romance, expelled from actual life,
Sneaks back in middle age,
Impossible in groan and taunt.
Their gilt on top, mould underneath,
Revolts us—

but you are a girl.
Your problem cannot be denied.
In the Russia of the past
Women once pinned flowers
To their shoulders, chained to lovers,
Flogged by snarling guards
In the exile to Siberia,
And in the Russia of today
Men and women, proud of working-hours,
Sturdy, far from blood-steeped tinsel,
Take their summer vacations
On the steppes, in cleaner games,
In flowers, pledges, loyalties,
Clear-growing, inevitable,
Deepening in their youth.
Steal, for an hour, now and then,
To your time of violets, the hope
Of less impeded tenderness
In a freedom yet to come,
Then fold it in your heart for unapparent,
Secretly unyielding strength
On every picket-line throughout the world,
Revolutionary girl.

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Kingdom of the Blind

ROBERT SIMMONS

SUCH IS MY BELOVED, by Morley Callaghan. Scribners. $2.50.
SALT HOUSE, by Hazel Hawthorne. Stokes. $2.
CITY HARVEST, by Margaret Cheney Dawson. Macmillan. $2.
COME IN AT THE DOOR, by William March. Smith and Haas. $2.50.

OF THESE four novels, representative selections of contemporary American fiction, two are so maudlin as to scarcely deserve an appraisal, or even a careful reading; one is a conscientious and curiously unsuccessful picture of life among the bourgeois intellectuals; the last is a very sensitive presentation of the decay of the Southern petty-bourgeois. All, then, deal with ruined and demoralized environments, with uprooted and irresponsible individuals; the great difference is that Mrs. Dawson and Mr. March are conscious of the demoralization and approach it critically; Mr. Callaghan and Miss Hawthorne see it in a rosy light and, if they cannot accurately be said to celebrate it, at least soften its harshness.

Such Is My Beloved is so mawkish a performance it makes almost embarrassing reading. It revolves around the relationship of a young and earnest Catholic priest and two prostitutes who may be ranked with the most unreal of modern characters. Father Dowling meets these two girls, becomes interested in them, prays for them, befriends them, gets in trouble (not very seriously) on their account, and winds up in a sanitarium watching the "calm eternal water swelling darkly against the one faint streak of light" in the best tradition of slushy undergraduate prose. Good Catholics, who know how much hard work, money and time go into the organizing of anti-Marxian labor unions and the publishing of anti-Marxian worker's papers, and who know how completely the task of obscuring the class struggle dominates all branches of the holy apparatus, may consider Mr. Callaghan's story one-sided and unreal; he has so many limitations, however, that his political blindness scarcely deserves analysis. Father Dowling is sometimes presented as a two-fisted he-man, sometimes as a Sherwood Anderson groper, sometimes—though Mr. Callaghan seems to attach little importance to it—as slightly feeble-minded. But all efforts to confer individuality on these characters fail; if it were not for the difference in their names it would be almost impossible to tell the Bishop, Father Dowling, and the two prostitutes apart. Occasionally the book comes very close to parody, as in the attempts to capture the casual language of the prostitutes ("How do you do, Sweetie. We are so mighty pleased to see you"), and in the scene where Father Dowling seizes the keeper of the whore-house by the throat, ("Take your hand off my throat, Father." " . . . I'll knock some respect into you, you lizard."). To these gauche remarks must be added the words of the French-Catholic critic, Jacques Maritain, who says of *Such Is My Beloved:* "I have been profoundly touched by the absolute sincerity and simplicity of this very moving book."

Hazel Hawthorne's *Salt House* is another highly sentimental story of love among the artists. It is the journal of a rather ambiguous girl's New England summer, which includes two love affairs, two trips to New York, several drunken parties, several quarrels, and innumerable moods in which the sea, the wind, the sand, and love figure prominently. The impressionistic method Miss Hawthorne has chosen limits her to a mere surface glimpse of her people, and in this swift glance, for all its indefiniteness, they seem to be extremely nervous, unstable, addicted to making deliberately misleading and picturesque remarks—in short to be typical representatives of the artistic underworld. In a hint or two Miss Hawthorne suggests some of the terrors that go with the isolated and uprooted life she describes, the insecurity, the helplessness before vague moods and feelings, the confusion that accompanies a lack of understanding of the deeper social processes at work, but she quickly covers these realities with her zest for the stale jokes, the irresponsibility, and the purposeless wandering of her people.

In *City Harvest* the problem of the intellectual under capitalism reaches a fuller statement, though one that leaves a good deal to be said. Mrs. Dawson's characters are prosperous New York intellectuals, including an architect, an artist, an editor, and various moderately-endowed camp-followers met during the course of a New Year's Eve celebration. Borrowing her method from Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway,* Mrs. Dawson has tried to show the emptiness and disorder of the lives of these people, particularly as they are revealed in the relationship of an architect and his artistic wife, identifying their love affairs with the general purposelessness and spiritual stagnation of the group. A long and involved memory of a worker who had been a friend, coming at a time when the drunkenness and demoralization of the night has reached its climax, suggests that Mrs. Dawson senses what her people need to restore them to health, and similar references scattered throughout the book point to the same conclusion. Nevertheless, *City Harvest* is exasperatingly one-sided, exasperating because it comes within striking distance of being an illuminating study. For all her insistence on the emptiness of her characters, one feels that the author has actually been taken in by them; she pictures them as deceitful, for instance, but their betrayals are strictly limited to sex; they seem to turn their deceit off and on as they get in and out of bed. Elsewhere they are good-natured, pure-minded and innocent of speech to an extent that is astonishing to anyone even remotely familiar with the habits and customs of bourgeois intellectuals. That scratching and clawing for social position or professional advantage, that endless slander and intrigue—nothing so vulgar intrudes on this picture, and the absence suggests Mrs. Dawson's limitations; it suggests why her characters seem to float through events without encountering more substantial barriers than vague moods either of boredom or oppression .

Come in at the Door is so far superior to these other novels that in strict fairness it should not be judged with them. Coming after *Company K,* which was a powerful, though narrow, story of the War, it reveals a considerable broadening of Mr. March's talent, a sustained narrative, a mastery of complex characters. Though in many respects March's work resembles Faulkner's, it has none of that meaningless melodrama which so frequently pushes Faulkner's novels into absurdity and about which even the author, lately, seems to have grown self-conscious. *Come in at the Door* is the story of Chester Hurry, who is oppressed throughout his life by his memory of the hanging of a Negro—a hanging for which he, due to the jealousy of his father's Negro mistress, had been responsible. There are sizeable gaps and weaknesses in the tracing of Chester's progress through his indifferent marriage, his dull acceptance of life, to his madness; there are holes into which another book could be dropped; but the tediousness and narrowness of life in a small Southern town is powerfully communicated. The half-insanity of the ruined Tarletons, with whom Chester lives, his passive acceptance of events, his uncle's squalid disgrace, make up a picture of decay that has none of the false glamor books of this sort usually possess; the decay at least is clearly seen, even if its causes are not.

There are twelve short and irrelevant and generally bad symbolic short stories inserted between the chapters of this book—little Lord Dunsany fables about lovers and princesses. They serve no apparent purpose, though an explanation on the jacket says they repeat the recurring themes of the novel. Actually, they suggest something much different and much more significant; they suggest that Mr. March did not consider his novel complete in

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its own right, or that he sensed its actual incompleteness and introduced these stories as prods to the reader's imagination. Incomplete his novel does seem, with a vacancy that cannot be remedied by such measures; it seems incomplete because the strange and exceptional characters in it are so seldom poised against the more normal types of their own environment, because their complex problems are so seldom related to the broad social processes which have conditioned those problems. Even the hanging of the Negro, the central complication of the book, is the result of an exceptional sequence of events, scarcely related to the violent suppression of the Negroes which is the most conspicuous feature of Southern life and which leaves its scars on all elements in the population; it is the result of a personal intrigue and its meaning is consequently limited to Chester's personal and confused guilt. With all his gifts Mr. March shows himself insensitive to the greater drama of that day-to-day, minute-to-minute struggle of the Negroes to break through the restraints imposed on them, and of the struggles of their exploiters to keep them down, to separate them from the white workers, to intimidate and confuse them; he shows himself to be unaware of the spread of this conflict through the social order and concentrates exclusively on the psychological casualties who are among its victims. The twelve little stories scattered through his novel, dealing with fairy-story princesses and lovers, may be taken as warnings of the way Mr. March intends to solve —or rather to evade—his problem, which is the problem of all writers who see signs of decay, of misery, of wasted lives all around them but who will not accept the only science which offers an adequate explanation and an emotionally and intellectually adequate program. If Mr. March goes in the direction these fairy-stories point, still farther from the realities of the class struggle he now seems to recognize, the road will be open for him, well-traveled and easy, but leading straight into the arms of James Branch Cabell at its end.

Rebels and Robbers

LOUIS M. HACKER

REBEL AMERICA, by Lillian Symes and Travers Clement. Harper and Bros. $3.
THE ROBBER BARONS, by Matthew Josephson. Harcourt, Brace and Co. $3.

BOTH these books are significant and should be read. It is true that the contributions they make to original historical literature are not particularly important, for both are largely compilations from other and familiar books; but they are interesting as straws in the wind. For *Rebel America* and *The Robber Barons* are two current examples of the preoccupation of a growing group of intellectuals with American revolutionary themes. This is a hopeful sign; and there is every reason to believe that, as works of this kind multiply, real scholarly achievement must emerge not only on the part of an increasing company of free-lance students but from our universities as well. What is curious to observe in this connection is that the vanguard of the historians in the United States—and to a lesser extent this is also becoming true of workers in the other social sciences—is made up of non-professional scholars, who have no institutional ties and therefore no conscious middle-class loyalties. The work they are doing is still tentative; in most cases the writers are not grounded particularly well in fundamentals. But the future is bright and we have every reason to look forward to the increasing appearance of mature studies in history, politics and economics by revolutionary students who have familiarized themselves with the apparatus of scholarship and, more important, who possess a dialectically sound viewpoint.

Miss Symes, with the collaboration of her husband, has sought to write "an informal history of social revolt in the United States." What she has compiled is the story of the craze for utopias on the part of early nineteenth-century middle-class reformers, the abortive beginnings of an American labor movement and the organization, after the Civil War, of working class groups for the radical reconstruction of American society. The book, which is entirely sympathetic to the cause of revolution, has many incidental merits, as well as deficiencies: the portraits of certain individuals, notably those of Robert Owen, Frances Wright, Johann Most, Daniel DeLeon, Eugene Debs and Bill Haywood are excellent, and there is also apparent a real familiarity with the development and shortcomings of the anarchist, Socialist Labor, Socialist and I.W.W. movements. On the other hand, Miss Symes is not only too much interested in the absurd vagaries of the middle-class cranks, but she rushes through recent developments at a break-neck pace. The history of Communism in the United States, for example, receives less than fifty pages out of the total of almost four hundred. The reader will also be amused at Miss Symes' boldness in trying to dispose of dialectical materialism in a couple of sentences, the theory of surplus value in a paragraph and the origins and significance of the Communist Manifesto in a page or so. The book even contains a fifteen-page biography of Marx.

These faults are incidental. What is more important is that Miss Symes, well-intentioned as she is, has misread completely the meaning of revolution in American history, seeing it only in terms of the romantic efforts at escape of the early reformers and the growth of proletarian movements; the result is, she has failed to appreciate the revolutionary significance of the War of Independence, the Abolitionist movement, the rise of the Republican Party, the destruction of wasteful and inefficient competitive industry by monopoly capitalism, and the like. The author, schooled only too well in the pre-war Socialist ideology, has only condescension, for example, for the Abolitionists because they were members of the middle class and were deaf to the aspirations of the working class leaders of their day. That the Garrisons, Lovejoys, and Browns were true revolutionists because they represented the advance of rising industrial capitalism in its struggle against Southern slavocracy, Miss Symes does not understand; and her blindness to the dialectical significance of the revolt against England and the creation of monopoly capitalism is also apparent. The end result is, structurally, a really meaningless book. It must be clearly understood by the historical scholar that the history of the United States is the history of revolution in this country; and that a revolutionary tradition cannot be created unless the import of revolt is, in every case, evaluated in terms of its own day and generation and in the light of the then existing antagonisms.

Mr. Josephson's work is much more pretentious than Miss Symes's. Theoretically buttressed with quotations from Volume I of *Capital,* Veblen, Sombart, Tawney, Hobson, the Beards, and Henry George (!), *The Robber Barons* attempts to be a history of monopoly capitalism in the United States during the years from 1861 to 1901. To those who are not familiar with Gustavus Myers' *The History of the Great American Fortunes,* Lewis Corey's *House of Morgan,* John T. Flynn's *God's Gold: John D. Rockefeller and His Times,* B. J. Hendrick's *Life of Andrew Carnegie* and *The Age of Big Business,* John Moody's *The Masters of Capital* and *The Railroad Builders, and* R. E. Riegel's *The Story of the Western Railroads,* Mr. Josephson's book will make interesting and valuable reading. Here are told in considerable detail the stories of the formative years of the great rail systems and the oil and steel monopolies and of the emergence of the fi-

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From *The Paris Commune* by William Siegel

nance capitalists; the lives of the leading enterprisers of the period, that is, Vanderbilt, Gould, Huntington, Hill, Harriman, Carnegie, Rockefeller, Frick, and Morgan; and tales of some of the more spectacular scandals of this glamorous epoch, such as the Crédit Mobilier, the South Improvement Company, the despoiling of the Erie, and the like.

But Mr. Josephson's book is no more the history of monopoly capitalism than Miss Symes's is that of revolution in America, and the reason is somewhat similar: an unfamiliarity with the vital forces shaping national institutional growth. Mr. Josephson has sought to simplify the nature of monopoly, not only in giving too much significance to the achievements of the individual enterprisers but in seeking to isolate single incidents as primary causal factors in what were really complex chains of events. Thus, in the case of Standard Oil, Mr. Josephson, following the false lead of J. A. Hobson, who looks upon monopoly as the seizure and possession of a strategic economic "narrows," characterizes the creation of combination in oil *refining* as the most important step in the building up of the oil monopoly. This, of course, was not the case. Combination in refining took place in the early 'seventies, while conspiracies with railroads and devices like the South Improvement Company were only initial moves in the game. Monopoly in oil was not achieved until the Rockefellers and their associates controlled their own transportation and distribution facilities; and it was not until the late 'eighties, years after the independent refiners had been bought out, that Standard Oil got to this point, largely by owning its own pipe lines.

Again, stopping at the year 1901 is meaningless, for the processes of monopoly are still going on. What Mr. Josephson's intention here was he has not explained: and one may only conjecture whether he meant to imply that monopoly capitalism's progressive period was terminated with the entrance of the finance capitalist (United States Steel was organized by Morgan in 1901) or that institutionalization of industry set in at this time with the disappearance from active management of Carnegie and the Rockefellers. Either assumption is erroneous, for domination by finance capitalism is a characteristic of monopoly and not a subsequent stage; while institutionalization was present in the Carnegie Steel Company fully fifteen years before the Carnegie organization was utilized as the base for the building of United States Steel.

I have elaborated on the mistakes committed by Miss Symes and Mr. Josephson only because a proper understanding of the pitfalls which have been their undoing will prevent the recurrence of such errors in subsequent works. The rewriting of American history is of the first importance; but enthusiasm for and sympathy with the cause of revolution are not quite weighty enough equipment for the task.

A Five-Inch Shelf of Booklets

OAKLEY JOHNSON

TO DO for classic revolutionary literature what President Eliot of Harvard did for the Graeco-Roman-Renaissance writings (*The Harvard Classics*), and to do it in one-twelfth the shelf-space, is no easy job. The literature of Marxism is immense and often difficult to master. To be informed on theory and to be courageous and correct in action are equally inseparable from the definition of Communist, but understanding of theory requires study. The college graduate as well as the manual worker must start from the beginning, and may often, because of his mis-education, find it harder than the worker does to master Marxism. And at this time, with so much silly talk of a "new social order" by those who don't understand it, and so much demagogic talk by those who are secretly determined to prevent it, the inquiring and newly radicalized intellectual must watch his step. He must go a bit slow at first, and survey the field, and really inform himself. With the world about to enter upon a new round of wars and revolutions, and with Fascist and semi-Fascist political line-ups, announcing "radical" programs curiously intertwined with more or less crude nationalist notions, forming on all sides of us and attempting to capture the partly radicalized professionals, students, farmers, and labor "aristocracy," it is absolutely essential that all who seriously seek a solid theoretical basis give careful attention to Marxist-Leninist teaching.

The idea intended, therefore, under the highly allusive heading, *A Five-Inch Shelf of Booklets,* is to outline a course of reading on Marxism-Leninism that will give in brief form authentic, non-repetitious, permanently dependable, and substantially complete information. Not, understand, enough information to make the callow white collar or high-school trained factory worker an "expert" or a "theoretician," but sufficient (1) to enable him to understand what is going on in the world and to understand what the Party press says in its analyses of world political happenings, and (2) to feel confident that he has a pretty satisfactory general introduction to the more specialized publications of the movement.

An introduction to Marxism-Leninism must consist partly of the older classics of Marx and Engels, partly of the newer classics of Lenin. But it must also give the historical background of these writings, on the one hand, and, on the other, show their application to present-day conditions and especially to American problems. It must give particular attention to the Soviet Union, the first country in which workers' rule became an established fact, and must to some degree explain the rôle and the difficulties of the Communist Party.

The order in which one should read this material is not of great importance: probably

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the best order is that in which the books are listed below. Certainly one should begin with the *Communist Manifesto*, the first and fundamental program; in each subject-group the booklets are listed (with one or two exceptions) in the order of their historical appearance, which is the most illuminating approach; one can begin, however, with whatever subject-group one is interested in. The serious student will not, however, put off political economy to the end, for only in the light of its teachings can political and social problems and movements — unemployment, panics, wars, Fascism, revolutions—be really understood.

The subject-group, historic theoretical discussions and formulations, sets forth the chief philosophic doctrines of Marxism-Leninism: *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* gives the best short explanation of "Historic Materialism" yet offered, of inestimable importance not only to political leaders but to writers and artists (a theory not to be confused with or limited to the vulgar "economic determinism" of radical-liberal writers); the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* gives among other things Marx's forecast of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" (his own phrase) as the political state necessary after the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist government; two important works by Lenin, *The State and Revolution* and *Imperialism*, bring applied Marxism up to date through an irrefutable analysis of the "democratic" capitalist state and the working of international finance capital.

The scores of controversial subjects that now agitate the radicalized and semi-radicalized masses—such as tactics, Party discipline, unionism, the Negro question, the application of Communist theory under American conditions, the winning over to the workers' side of the farmers and intelligentsia, etc.—will be greatly clarified if viewed in the light of the remaining writings, particularly *The Civil War in France, The Paris Commune*, and *The Revolution of 1905*, which analyze historic workers' revolts, and also Stalin's *Speeches on the American Communist Party* and Lenin's *War and the Second International*. The much-debated but little understood menace of Fascism, together with the nationalist demagogy and the reformist wavering which complicate its growth, are well treated in Piatnitsky's *Present Situation in Germany* and Browder's *Meaning of Social Fascism*.

One cannot give even a sentence to each pamphlet, much less discuss the contents of each item in such a list as this, without at the same time writing another pamphlet. But surely one cannot fail to at least call special attention to Lenin's great essay, *"Left" Communism*, to the writings which describe the great achievements of the Soviet Union, to the *Open Letter to All Members of the Communist Party*, and to Stalin's *The Lenin Heritage*.

The list of the Marxist-Leninist classics making up the five-inch shelf follows:

The Historic Programs:

1. *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), Marx & Engels ..... $.05
2. *Program of the Communist International* (1928) ..... .10

Historic Theoretical Discussions and Formulations:

3. *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, Engels. .25
4. *Two Speeches*, by Karl Marx (1850 and 1864) ..... .05
5. *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx. .50
6. *A.B.C. of Communism*, Bucharin and Preobraschensky (Out of Print)
7. *The Teachings of Karl Marx*, Lenin.... .15
8. *The State and Revolution*, Lenin..... .30
9. *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin ..... .35

Historic Analyses of Class Struggles:

10. *The Civil War in France*, Marx..... .25
11. *The Paris Commune*, Lenin..... .20
*12. *The Revolution of 1905*, Lenin..... .20

Historic Explanations of Political Economy:

13. *Wage-Labor and Capital*, Marx..... .25
14. *Value, Price and Profit*, Marx..... .35
15. *The Decline of Capitalism*, Varga (Out of Print)

History of the International Movement:

16. *The Two Internationals*, Dutt (Out of Print)
17. *Ten Years of the Communist International*, Komor ..... .15

Party Controversy:

18. *"Left" Communism, An Infantile Disorder*, Lenin..... .25
19. *Speeches on the American Communist Party*, Stalin ..... .15

The Founder of the International Working Class Movement:

20. *Karl Marx*, Perchik..... .15

Certain Vital Problems:

21. *Religion*, Lenin ..... .25
22. *The War and the Second International*, Lenin ..... .20
*23. *The Present Situation in Germany*, Piatnitsky ..... .10
24. *The Meaning of Social Fascism*, Browder .05
25. *Open Letter to All Members of the Communist Party* ..... .01
26. *Problems of Strike Strategy* (Strassburg Conference, 1929) ..... .15

The Allies of the Proletariat:

27. *The American Farmer*, Anstrom..... .10
28. *The American Negro*, Allen..... .10
*29. *Negro's Struggle against Imperialism* Ford ..... .10
*30. *Open Letter to American Intellectuals*, Gorki ..... .10

*American Working Class History:

31. *The History of May Day*, Trachtenberg. .10
32. *The Heritage of Gene Debs*, Trachtenberg ..... .10

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

33. *The Great Initiative* (including *Communist Saturdays*) (Out of Print)
34. *The Result of the First Five-Year Plan*, Stalin ..... .10
35. *Towards a Classless Society* (Second Five-Year Plan), Leontyev ..... .10
36. *The Lenin Heritage*, Stalin ..... .03

*NOTE:—Certain other good pamphlets are obviously needed to give this list the tentative completeness for which it is designed: (1) A pamphlet on the history and present problems of American labor unions; (2) a pamphlet on the history of Fascism which would do for Fascism in general (with special attention to its formal origin in Italy) what Piatnitsky's essay has done for German Fascism; (3) another on the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, which would sum it up anew in brief form (as does Lenin's *Revolution of 1905*) for the present wave of awakening A. F. of L. and white collar workers; (4) a pamphlet on professional workers and the middle class generally which would sum up for them their relationship to the chief class forces in capitalist society, and analyze their present problems. . . . The pamphlets described as at present "Out of Print" will soon, doubtless, be made available again to interested readers. . . . Ford's pamphlet, *Negro's Struggle Against Imperialism*, ought to be enlarged, especially with additional statistical material, to cover more completely the world struggles of the Negro people, as Allen's does for the Negroes in America. . . . Careful readers will be glad to find that the edition of the *Communist Manifesto* is printed with notes, and that the editions of Perchik's *Karl Marx* and Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* are by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute of Moscow. Those interested should write to or call at The Workers Bookshop, 50 East 13th Street, New York City, for the listed pamphlets.

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Poet Among Imagists

GENEVIEVE TAGGARD

COLLECTED POEMS, 1921-1931, by William Carlos Williams with a preface by Wallace Stevens. The Objectivist Press. $2.

THIS poet is a doctor. Thermometers are to him what lawyers' briefs are to Masters, what copy is to Sandburg. And there's the doctor's attitude, too. Doctors train to fight one kind of evil—disease; they must be immensely learned as combatants; skilled, disciplined, and hard-boiled. Doctors handle human beings as intimately as mothers handle babies. They see the human without the mask. They have a special slant on things. This often shows when they write, no matter what they write about. I think of Chekov, one of the prime examples. They are less inclined to be dupes. Williams poetry rejects the high-falutin'. He looks on what is called "poetis" as if it were a disease. He has seen too many sick folks, too much sick civilization, too much bad poetry. He seems to feel that poetry must be saved from too much sweet—as if poetry had a spoiled stomach:

> a green truck
> dragging a concrete mixer
> passes in the street
> the clatter and true sound
> of verse . . .

As we read this volume, ten years' work, it becomes clear that Williams proposes curing the sick mind by prescribing a diet of plain rough food:

> Out of such drab trash as this
> by a metamorphosis
> bright as wallpaper or crayon
> or where the sun casts ray on ray on
> flowers in a dish, you shall weave
> for Poesy a gaudy sleeve . . .
> .. ..
> Clothe him
> richly, those who loathe him
> will besmirch him fast enough.

This is like Cummings' poem to Mr. Vinal, where he says that "certain ideas gestures rhymes, like Gillette Razor Blades having been used and reused to the mystical moment of dullness emphatically are 'Not To Be Re-sharpened'." Most of us agree that this is healthy, nay even at times necessary. Still the prohibition has a way of making poets culty, esoteric, fancy, and obscure. It's a fact. And lo and behold, other poets have discovered that the hone of intensity will sharpen a commonplace idea and make it good again.

Williams hates the effete. Think of the usual spring poem and contrast with this:

> LEE'S
> Lunch
> Spaghetti Oysters
> a specialty Clams
>
> And raw Winter's done
> to a turn—Restaurant; Spring!
> Ah, Madam, what good are your thoughts
>
> romantic but true
> beside this gayety of the sun
> And that huge appetite?

Now, oddly enough, after admitting Williams' contention, our real difficulty begins. In some places Williams' style makes his poetry very obscure when the subject is not obscure; in others you look for a deep and subtle meaning, a tremendous concentration, and it's just a picture, better if Gropper or Dehn drew it. I think he should not have learned the manners of the Imagists. Sometimes this style is like the performance of the prestidigitator who after many passes in the air reaches up his sleeve and pulls out a cuff. Williams wrote when he sent "The Red Wheelbarrow" to the editor of a recent anthology:

> The wheelbarrow in question stood outside the window of an old Negro's house on a back street in the suburb where I live. It was pouring rain and there were white chickens walking about in it. The sight impressed me somehow as about the most important, the most integral that it had ever been my pleasure to gaze upon. And the meter though no more than a fragment succeeds in portraying this pleasure flawlessly, even it succeeds in denoting a certain unquenchable exaltation—in fact I find the poem quite perfect.

Here is the poem:

> so much depends
> upon
>
> a red wheel
> barrow
>
> glazed with rain
> water
>
> beside the white
> chickens

The spacing, the spot-light on a single word, the pause and preparation for a flash like the flash of the indoor photographer—the style leads you astray. It is the style of teasing, of ironic fooling, of pretense. You can't tell about an integral mystical experience with that style. (At least I don't think you can; I don't see how you can.) It seems to me that

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Williams has failed to put on the paper what he felt. He thinks it is there. He succeeds in other poems; notably in *Hemmed in Males, The Sun Bathers, The God Head, The Bull, The Winds, The Sea Elephant, Rapid Transit, A Morning Imagination About Russia.* I quote from this last. Here Williams seems to me to speak again his desire for a less cluttered, a more solid world:

> We have little now but we have that. We are convalescents. Very feeble. Our hands shake. We need a transfusion. No one will give it to us, they are afraid of infection. I do not blame them. We have paid heavily. But we have got—touch. The eyes and the ears down on it. Close.

No one can quarrel with his desire to get touch. But the battle about getting the plain object into poetry seems to me to have delayed Williams and to have wasted his powers. Which would be to use the plain object or any object, to the end his tastes require. Stevens and Pound, to name two of his contemporaries, are better poets than he—tough, elegant, subtle and brilliantly musical. Williams is not like them although he uses a technique common to the modernist school.

If he were twenty years old now he could use his plain object to an appropriate end. I think this because I read a poem the other day about the charge of an electric battery and a battleship. The poem swept these swiftly into consciousness as part of a poem against war and class exploitation. The plain object was not an end in itself, simply a natural part of a poem that aimed past detail into meaning.

We never give enough credit to poets who prepare the way for final expression, because we continue to think of the artist as an individual, all-powerful. Poems have names signed to them; the assumption in an individualistic period is that the poem was made by the man who signs his name. The truth is that the poet is the person who is able by a great discipline to catch a force which is not his at all, which has gathered volume from many unknown minds, some of them poets. So I think of Williams as a poet fallen among Imagists, as a poet who has done his share of spade work. He is valuable for all his lacks. Times have changed. We do not need to pay such exaggerated attention to "real objects" because now the fog clears off; real ideas challenge us.

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Farmers and Fakers

BEN FIELD

FARMERS UNITE THEIR FIGHT. Farmers National Committee for Action. 15c.

VILLAGE TALE, by Phil Stong. Harcourt Brace and Co. $2.

THIS pamphlet and the novel are both about farmers. That, at first shot, appears to be all they have in common. *Village Tale* is the work of a man born on an Iowa farm who has been able to make name and money by exploiting Iowa farmers in three recent novels. What he has returned to the farmer is about what the millers, packers, and bankers have returned. *Farmers Unite Their Fight* is the story of the Farmers Second National Conference held in Chicago, November 15-18, 1933. It is the work of more than 700 farmers representing at least 120,000 Negro and white farmhands and farmers. Each one of these has been a "failure," and has determined, dirt-farmer though he be, to take no more dirt from Wall Street, and to fight in united action to keep the swine's snout from rooting him off the land. The pamphlet is of historic importance. And the only reason the novel is dragged in after it is to prove that only the rank and file farmers and that only the writers who are willing to understand and share their fight with them are capable of telling the truth about the American farmer.

Village Tale is the story of a tiny Iowa village during the first year of Roosevelt. Drury Stevenson, "gaunt, Lincolnian" farmer, eggs on Farmer Elmer Jamieson to shoot at Slaughter Somerville while Somerville is kissing Mrs. Jamieson in the dark church. Drury has the whole village out to watch the shooting. The novel ends with Slaughter and Sybil Jamieson going off to get married, leaving Jamieson chopping wood, Drury to be hanged for the suicide of Bolly Hootman, a tenant farmer, Drury's daughter running off with the train conductor, and the snow, kicked up by the rumpus, settling down once more over one-horse Brunswick.

What has actually been happening in such villages during the last year or two? *Farmers Unite Their Fight* tells you. It tells you of the frame-up of Niles Cochrane for daring to strike. It tells you of the beating up of Frank North of another small Iowa town by the Vigilantes for daring to lead the fight

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against sheriff sales. It reminds you of the drumhead trials of last spring, of farmers being herded by the hundreds into bullpens by the militia for fighting evictions, for fighting bankers and insurance companies. But Phil Stong's farmers (called rustics and clowns by his hero, Slaughter Somerville) spend most of their time bulling each other's wives, gabbing in the village store, waiting for the afternoon train, skating on the frozen Des Moines. Only one farmer, the villain in the piece, in any way shows that he is aware of what is going on in the world and spills Mr. Stong's beans. It is only Drury who talks strike, brands the railroad directors a lot of fatheads, and is really concerned about the New Deal and the freedom of the press. The station master, another one of Stong's sturdy Americans, asks Drury whether he's a Socialist. Drury sneers back, "No, I want the country to go to hell. I'm a Republican." Is this mere devilishness on Drury's part? this answer to Ben, who says that a cow you know is more important to a farmer than ten million Chinese you don't know? Is it envy that makes Drury touch up Elmer against Slaughter and also round up the village to give Slaughter a shivaree and a good horsefiddling? That is Stong's answer. But we find the answer in the different economic conditions of the two men. Slaughter can have his peaches and cream every morning. He owns a 700-acre farm, has the whole village coming to him for corn, heifers, etc., and gets his woman openly. The kulak farmer in him can shout to the world, "It's taken me 30 years to notice this is a hard world and if you're strong you can't afford to worry about people that are weak." Drury is a poor farmer, rusty machinery clutters up his yard. He has to sneak through the village to enjoy his woman, the hard, long-haired Mate Hootman, the only other worthwhile character in the book. His poverty leads to bitterness and isolation.

State Fair by Phil Stong was taken by the movies. *Village Tale* is another movie piece. The only real man is made a sadist and a whoremaster and identified with all that is objectionable to the movie magnates—strikes, criticism of the New Deal—and hanged in the end. The "whore gets her just deserts" by being driven out of the town. Yet who can blame her for taking up with Drury when her husband is a worm both sexually and in character? The young village girls like all healthy young Americans haven't an idea in their pretty heads but looking for the young men whose pigs they will eat and whose beds they will warm. And Slaughter Somerville, handsome college-farmer, comes home like all true heroes with the bacon.

The blurb crows that Phil Stong has a genuine, lusty understanding of his "own people." This is praise with no basis in fact. The farmers at the Conference, who were able to unite and organize more than 120,000 farm workers, croppers, middle and small farmers, show a true lusty understanding of their people. And the writer who is historically minded, who knows the militant tradition of the American farmer from the days of the bull plow, who identifies himself with the struggling farmers and participates in their fight, and who has the Marxian teeth in the pitchfork with which he handles his material. Such a writer and only such a writer can have the true lusty understanding of his people.

Such a writer's own people swarm in *Farmers Unite Their Fight.* There are the forty-five farm women up in the dining hall of People's Auditorium in Chicago discussing birth control and sex hygiene. Then the speech by Birchard of the Farmers' Unity League of Canada calling for solidarity that will smash all national lines. The report by the Alabama cropper, leader of 6,000 organized Negro farmers, showing how the croppers fight the Blue Eagle landlords. John Sumption of South Dakota ending his description of how Dakota farmers carry out a strike: "Last, there's the Entertainment Committee. We must have some fun while we fight."

A couple of weeks before the conference Secretary of Agriculture Wallace visited Chicago to defend the A.A.A. In the course of a speech before some of the greatest meat and grain robbers in the world he compared the N.R.A. and the A.A.A. to two legs of the same body. The farmers are well aware that they are legs of the same body. *Farmers Unite Their Fight* shows the farmers organizing and fighting to cut our American ground from under the two legs of the monstrous body.

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RUBICON or THE STRIKEBREAKER.

THE story of a marine worker's conversion to sympathy with the Soviet way of life. The Rubicon to be crossed is the distinction between Bill Parker as a strikebreaker and Bill Parker as a solid member of his class. The parallelisms, contrasting "before" and "after," suggest somewhat the balance-sheet pattern of Thomas Mann's early story, *Tonio Kröger,* though the material is of course profoundly different. In Mann's story the two contrasted attitudes are Bohemian and bourgeois; in *Rubicon* they draw the contrast between the worker "on his own" and the worker in his group.

Bill Parker is a stoker, who hates his job and finds satisfaction only in the periods of compensatory dissipation which are open to him when his ship is in port. We have here, in outline, the customary Puritanic swing between drudgery and distraction characteristic of a man whose work lacks group motivation. In any event, Bill has nothing but the freedom of the port town to look forward to. Hence, when he arrives at Havana during a coalheavers' strike, and is told by the captain that he cannot go ashore until the boat is coaled, he promptly sets to work with some of the other men heaving the coal into the bunkers. Later we see him ashore, as the reward of his labors. He meets the captain, drunk in a dive—and when the captain taunts him, they get into a fight, with the result that the stoker loses his job and is blacklisted. However, there is a Soviet boat in the harbor—a new hand is needed, and Bill is accepted for the job, the Soviet captain having no objection to a blacklisted man.

In the course of his brawls, Bill had defended himself with a horseshoe. He keeps this horseshoe as a trophy. It becomes the fulcrum of the plot in this wise: On reaching Leningrad, Bill goes to live in an international home for sailors, where he fraternizes with Communist workers and becomes imbued with their attitudes. He has also come into contact with a capitalist lumberman who employs him as an assistant. This lumberman attempts to sabotage a Soviet mill, since he will profit by a time-clause in his contract if delivery is delayed—but Bill recognizes his horseshoe as the implement that did the wrecking, and he exposes his employer.

For contrasted parallels, we have such events as the gluttonous eating of the men on the first ship vs. the gusty eating of those on the Soviet boat; the dissipations under the one way of life vs. the activities in education and sport under the other; dismal living quarters vs. homelike living quarters—and, over all, the horseshoe.

The play has many of those shots of machinery in motion, viewed from peculiar angles and in abrupt sequences, at which the Soviet photographers are particularly apt. Again, there are several closeups of individual workers, a tradition of rugged portraiture to which Soviet films have brought a new understanding. There are some quiet skies that are noteworthy, brief studies of turbulent water, and a few very appealing Sheeler-like stills that look up into the well distributed lines of a ship's rigging.

BETWEEN OURSELVES

OUR questionnaire asking for criticism brought replies from subscribers in 38 states. Their occupations, in the order of frequency, are: professionals, office workers, industrial workers, artists, business people, and farmers. Of each five who answered, two had never read THE NEW MASSES before it became a weekly. It seems the subscribers are a very much divided camp on the question of pictures on the cover—314 voted for a picture each issue, 186 against; most of them objected to a type cover for every issue (although newsstands reports since the "bull's-eye" cover has been used indicate to us that this kind of cover is of definite value.)

Other questions: Are the various departments well handled?—Book reviews—yes, 522; no, 18; screen—yes, 415; no, 69; music—yes, 406; no, 39; theatre—yes, 462; no, 45.

Do you buy books and attend shows as a result of reading reviews?—Yes, 562; no, 46.

Do you want more fiction?—Yes, 225, no, 306; poems?—yes, 237; no, 209; foreign material?—yes, 516; no, 60; critical articles?—yes, 450; no, 78; Letters from America?—yes, 490; no, 125.

Are the editorial paragraphs informative?—Yes, 560; no, 36; stimulating?—yes, 425; no, 40; dull?—yes, 27; no, 272; well written?—yes, 415; no, 45; interesting?—yes, 468; no, 12; sufficiently militant?—yes, 453; no, 62.

A year ago THE NEW MASSES ran a subscription contest in which the chief prize, a trip to the Soviet Union, was won by Victor Cutler of Los Angeles. The magazine could not at that time complete its part of the bargain, so Cutler did not go. The weekly took over this obligation, and we have just received word from World Tourists, Inc., that arrangements are completed and that Cutler will leave for the Soviet Union on the *S.S. Ile de France,* April 14.

S. D. Mirsky, formerly Prince Mirsky, is now a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He is the author of *Russian Literature,* and *Russia: A History.*

Genevieve Taggard teaches at Bennington College, Vermont. Her books include *For Eager Lovers, Words For a Chisel, Travelling Standing Still,* and a full-length study of Emily Dickinson.

Pearl Binder is an English artist. William Siegel and Anton Refregier have an exhibition of their work at the New School for Social Research.

Samuel Ornitz is at work on the second half of his play *In New Kentucky.*

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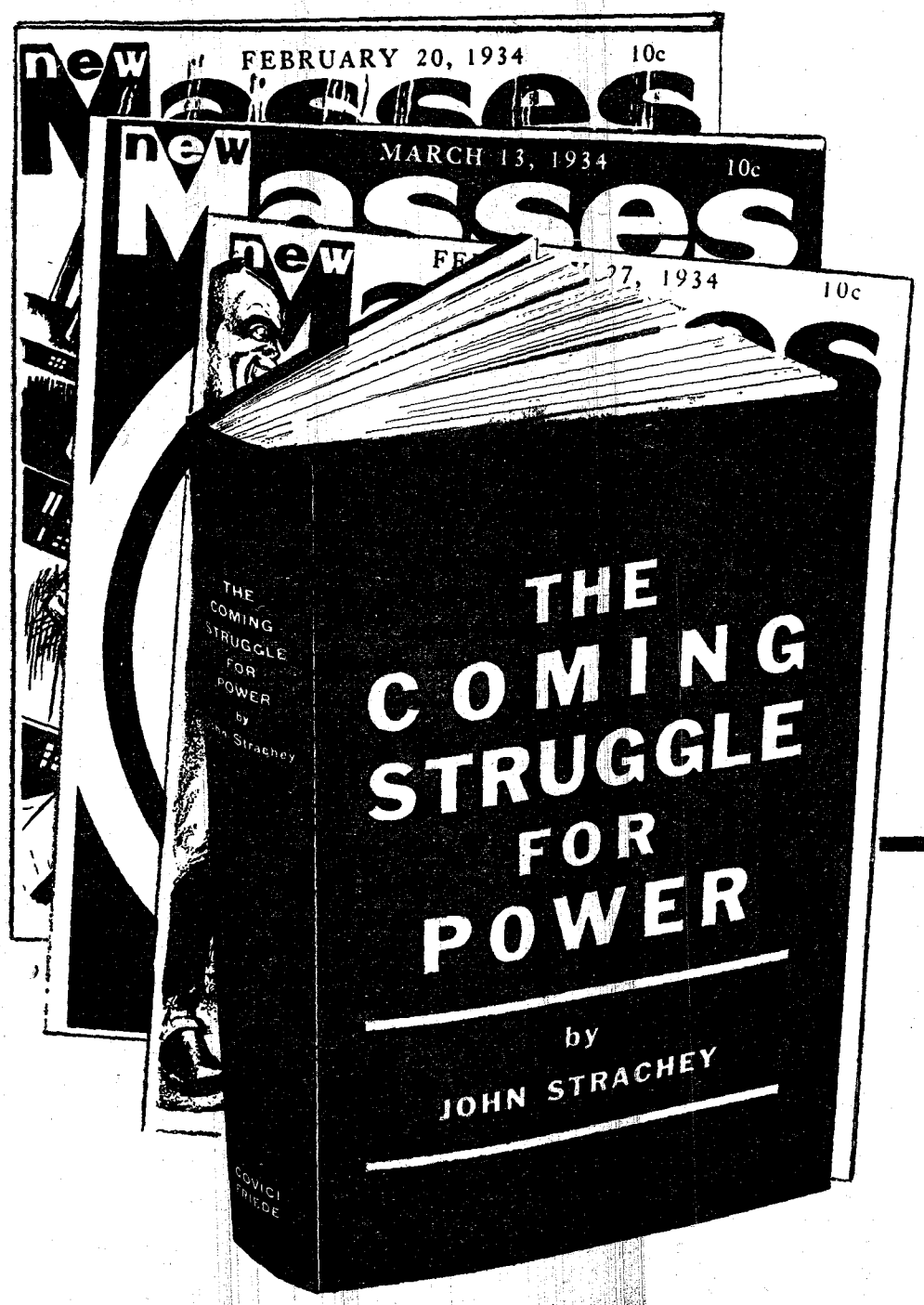

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